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# GREAT MEN OF SHAHABAD

*Edited by*

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and

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## INTRODUCTION.

The present work is the first of a series of studies relating to the social, economic and cultural life of the district of Shahabad. In these days of universal planning we, in our humble sphere have also fixed up a five year Plan for publishing two volumes of these studies every year. The subjects chosen for investigation and publication in subsequent issues are (1) Economic Life of Shahabad (2) Bhojpuri literature (3) Trade and transport of the district (4) Saints of Shahabad (5) An anthropological study on the aborigines of Shahabad (6) Archaeology of the district (7) Public health and medical relief in Shahabad (8) Social life in Shahabad and (9) Economic History of Shahabad. Broadly speaking, there are three reasons which have impelled us to devote our energy and attention to the study of the different aspects of the life of our own district. First, a narrow and restricted field of investigation is more suited for training up young scholars in research work than a vast unspecified field. If any new light has got to be thrown on the bounds of existing knowledge have got to be extended, a small field of enquiry is likely to yield more fruitful results. Secondly, a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the life of the district will inspire the younger generation to tackle the civic problems of the country in a statesman-like way. It is hoped that these studies will enable them to grasp the complex social problems with which they will have to deal as citizens of free India. Thirdly, the district of Shahabad has evolved in course of centuries a distinctive type of culture and civilisation which deserves a detailed study.

Shahabad, the city of the Emperor, by which appellation the district is known at present, derives its name from the fact that in 1529 Babar having defeated Mahmud Lodi and his Afghan followers pitched his camp in the town near the site of the old courts of the District Judge and proclaimed his sovereignty over western Bihar from this place. This town became known as Shahabad and subsequently the name was adopted for a Pargana and thereafter for the whole district which was constituted almost in its present size early in 1787 by Lord Cornwallis. The most ancient name of the district,

however, is mentioned in an inscription on a Jain temple at Masar which contains seven inscriptions dating back to 1386. The country is described therein as Karusadesa and the town of Arrah as Aramnagar. The Jain tradition preserved in this inscription probably gives the correct form from which the present name of the town Arrah, has been derived.

Dr. B. B. Majumdar, the learned editor of this present volume has rightly pointed out that the northern part of the district was known in Vedic times as Bhojpur, because, it was the land of the Bhoja tribe, for whom Visvamitra offered sacrifices. The contention of Dr. Majumdar is supported by local tradition which was recorded 133 yrs. ago by Francis Buchanan who in course of giving the history of Buxar states; "This forest of Chaitraratha is also called the Vedagarbha, being the place where the Munis or great sages of antiquity first studied the Vedas; and the places where several extraordinary personages of this description resided, are still shown" (An account of the Dist. of Shahabad p. 67) He again writes at another place (p. 70)—"Visvamitra is said to have resided for some-time at Vagsar, and Babu Gopal Saran, a Paramarka Rajput of uncommon learning, thinks that many heaps of rubbish, which extend along the banks of the Ganges, are to be attributed to this person or to his father Gadhi, and he says that the traces of a fortress may still be distinguished, although only the southern side remains, the northern having been long ago swept away by the river. He judiciously, and I think accurately pointed out several projecting eminences as remains of bastions, and particularly noticed one called Ram Chautara, where an image of that God and that of his wife Sita have been placed under a hut covered with tiles. The heaps above alluded to, consisting merely of earth and minute fragments of brick, bear every mark of the most remote antiquity."

Our district bears little evidence of the influence of Buddhism, though the areas beyond the river Sone were the strongholds of that faith. Emperor Asoka indeed placed an inscription inside a small cave near the top of Chandan Pir's hill to the east of the town of Sasaram; but Hiuen Tsang while visiting the district found little trace of Buddhist influence inside this district. At the beginning of the 7th Century A. D. he came to Masar (6 miles west of Arrah)

and in his account describes it as No-ho-so-lo, where he found the village inhabited entirely by Brahmans, who had no respect for the Law of Buddha. He also visited Arrah where he found an Asoka stupa and a lion pillar which was even then buried in the earth. Brahminism seems to have been triumphant here in the Gupta Age. Pirita Gupta of the later Gupta dynasty dedicated a temple to the Sun God at Deo Barùnarak (27 miles S. W. of Arrah), and his inscription still bears evidence of this fact. Another inscription of the year 635 A. D. found at Mundesvari (7 miles S. W. of Bhabua) refers to a feudatory chief named Udayasena who made large donations to the temple of Mandalesvara, a name of Siva. The structural relics at Baidyanath (N. E. of Bhabua Sub-divivision) have been described in the Archaeological Survey Report (Vol. XIX. P. 27-48) as illustrative of the earliest Brahmanical architecture of which we have knowledge" Here we find an inscription of Raja Madanpaladeva of the Pal dynasty.

In the Middle Ages Bhojpur played a conspicuous part in the History of N. India. It was noted for its valour, chivalry and love of independence. The lives of Pahalwan Singh, Kuar Singh and Maharaja Bahadur Keshav Prasad Singh of Dumraon given in this volume contain numerous references to the spirit of independence

In this volume the lives of a few of the great men of Shahabad only could be included. It is not an exhaustive study of all the great sons of the district. For obvious reasons we had to exclude lives of those eminent persons who are, fortunately enough, still amongst us. Amongst the persons of the bygone centuries we would have liked to include the biographies of Raja Pratap Dhawal (1162 A.D.), Maharajadhiraj Mandana Singh Mahapratap (1596 A.D.), of Shaikh Kabir Darwesh of Sasaram (1717 A.D.), of Shaha Mal, the founder of the Tilothu Raj family (1764 A.D.), of Choudhry Dhaval Singh (1785 A.D.) and of many other persons. But sufficient materials could not be collected on their life. We hope to deal with many of them in our forth coming volume on the archaeology of this district.

Lastly, I must offer my sincerest thanks to Principal Dr. Bimanbehari Majumdar who has planned the whole series and is efficiently guiding the researches. He is not only a recognised authority in

History, Economics and Politics, but also in mediaeval mysticism and Bengali Literature. We are fortunate in having a scholar like him amidst us to guide the noble work of unveiling the past glories and future potentialities of the district. Prof. Devendra Kumar has taken great pains in seeing the book through the Press. I thank all the contributors for the zeal they have shown in co-operating with the Principal.

Dated, Arrah,

*The 12th Jan. 1946.*

**Chakreshwar Kumar Jain.**

(President, Governing Body,  
H. D. Jain College)

# VISVAMITRA-THE FRIEND OF ALL

By

(Principal Dr. Bimanbehari Majumdar, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D, Bhagavataratna.)



Visvamitra is one of the most fascinating personalities of the Vedic period. Living in a custom-ridden age, he rebelled successfully against the conventions of the Vedic social system. Born of a Kshatriya family, he attained successively the rank of the Rsi, Maharsi and Brahmarshi. The major portion of the third Mandala of the Rgveda was revealed to him. He was not only a great poet himself, but was also the progenitor of a long line of distinguished Vedic seers. He combined in himself the roles of Priest, Warrior and Statesman. Visvamitra was the father of Sakuntala, and maternal grandfather of Bharata, the first imperial sovereign of India. He saved the Bharatas in a grave national crisis. He foisted Trisanku in the air, procured a son to Harischandra by virtue of his austerities, and put an end to the inhuman practice of sacrificing the life of human scapegoats. Tradition credits him with inventing the Dhanurveda, the science of archery, and bringing into existence the life-giving coconut-tree, which is called Visvamitra-priya in Sanskrit. By his manifold and beneficent activities he justified his name Visvamitra, the friend of all. The Vedas, the Puranas and the Epics take delight in recounting his heroic deeds.

## VISVAMITRA'S CONNECTION WITH SAHABAD

Visvamitra was born and brought up in Kanyakubja or Kanauj no doubt, but he attained the highest spiritual beatitude near Gaya and made Buxar the seat of his hermitage and the centre of his spiritual activities. There exists, even to-day, a place at Buxar, known as Visvamitra-ka-asrama. The very name of Buxar is belived to be a corrupted form of the original Sanskrit appellation, Vedagarbha<sup>1</sup>, the womb or origin of the Vedas.

1. Bengal District Gazetteers, Sahabad, 1906, Pp. 133-34, states, "Buxar is said to have been the home of many of the authors of the Vedic hymns and to have been called originally Veda-garbha, ie., the womb or origin of the Vedas. Buxar is an old Brahmanical site and various parts of it have ancient names such as Rameswar, Visvamitra-ka asrama".

The claim of Sahabad to count Visvamitra as one of its citizens does not rest merely on the slender ground of tradition. It is supported by strong evidences of the Vedas, Purans and epics. The people for whom Visvamitra performed sacrifices are referred to as "Ime Bhojah" in one of his hymns in the Rgveda<sup>1</sup>. The Aitareya Brahmana states that Bhoja was the designation of the clan of a princely family<sup>2</sup>. It is not unreasonable to seek the derivation of the Bhojpur pargana of Sahabad from the Bhoja clan of the Vedic age<sup>3</sup>. Some of the allusions in the later parts of the hymn referred to above, lends support to the validity of this hypothesis. Visvamitra prays to Indra to give over to his people the cattle of King Pramaganda of the Naicasakha city or territory in the country of Kikata, because the people there did not worship Indra with the milk of those cows<sup>4</sup>. Yaska informs us that "Kikata is the country where non-Aryans dwell<sup>5</sup>." Lexicographers like Hemchandra<sup>6</sup> and the author of Trikandsesa<sup>7</sup> identify Kikata with Magadha. The Vayu<sup>8</sup> and the Garuda Puranas<sup>9</sup> place the sacred city of Gaya in the Kikatas. Ignoring the combined testimonies of so many ancient writers, Prof. Kshetresha Chattopadhyaya opines that, "Kikata is the

- 
1. Rgveda III. 53. 7. "Ime Bhojah Angirсах Virupah Deva Putras Assurasya Virah". Following Sayana, H. H. Wilson translates the passage thus : "These sacrificers are Bhojas, of whom the diversified Angirases (are the priests); and the heroic sons of the expeller (of the foes of the gods) from heaven, bestowing riches upon Visvamitra at the sacrifice of a thousand (victims) prolong his life."
  2. Aitareya Brahmana VIII. 12, 14, 17.
  3. Dr. A. P. Banerjee-Shastri, in the Proceedings and Transactions of the Sixth All-India Oriental Conference, P. 186, says that "Bhojpur derives its name from the Bhojas of Visvamitra, and not from from Raja Bhoj of Ujjain in Malwa" as stated in the Shahabad Gazetteer.
  4. "Kim te Kruvanti Kikatesu Gavah. Nasiram duhre na tapanti gharman. A no bhara Pramagandasya Vedah." "Of what use are these cattle in Kikata, to you, O Indra ? They neither produce ssira, nor heat the gharma vessel at your sacrifice. Therefore, bestow on us their possessions." Rv. III. 53. 14.
  5. Yaska's Nirukta, VII. 32.
  6. Hemchandra's Abhidhana IV. 26.
  7. Trikandsesa II. 11.
  8. Vayu-Purana, 105-23. "Kikatesu Gaya Punya."
  9. Garuda-Purana Ch. 83

country to the immediate south of the Sutlej, i.e. Kurukshetra<sup>1</sup>." The learned Professor even overlooks the internal evidence of the 33rd hymn, composed by Visvamitra himself. In this hymn, Visvamitra implores the rivers, the Beas and the Sutlej, to stay with their floods below the axles of the army, led by the sage. He depicts himself as coming from a great distance with car and wagon<sup>2</sup>. He would not have said so, had Kikata been situated in the immediate south of the Sutlej. We, therefore, can not but accept the ancient identification of Kikata with Magadha. The Kikatas were the neighbours of the Bhojas. This in itself is sufficient to explain why Visvamitra requests Indra to give the wealth of the Kikatas to his own people, the Bhojas. The Natural enmity between the two neighbourly peoples was heightened by racial antagonism the Bhojas being Aryans and the Kikatas, non-Aryans<sup>3</sup>.

A close study of the Adikanda of the Ramayana also substantiates inference drawn from the Vedic studies. From this epic we learn that Visvamitra, accompanied by Rama and Lakshmana had to travel from Ayodhya, a good distance to the east in order to reach his hermitage. This hermitage must have been in Shahabad, because only a few hours' journey brought them to the bank of the river Son<sup>4</sup>.

### VISVAMITRA'S STRIVINGS FOR BRAHMARSIHOOD

In the third Mandala of the Rgveda, Visvamitra calls himself a Kusika<sup>5</sup>. Kusika according to the Mahabharata<sup>6</sup>, was the son of

1. Indian Culture, July 1936, pp. 15-17.

2. Rv. III. 33. 9

3. Weber (Indische Studies, I, P. 186), however, holds that the Kikatas were an Aryan people living in Magadha, but their religious rites differed from those of the orthodox school. Acceptance of this interpretation would make the hostility between the Bhojas and the Kikatas a religious one, like the enmity between southern Germans and northern Germans in the Thirty Years' War.

4. Ramayana I. 21-34

5. Rv. III. 26. 1-3; III 33. 5. III. 42. 9 etc.

6. Mbh. Anusasana Parva, Ch. IV. The Ramayana states that Kusa's son was Kusanabha and that the latter was the father of Gadhi



emperor Kusa. Kusika's son was Gadhi and Gadhi's son is Visvamitra. Gadhi, according to both the epics, ruled over Kanyakubja. The Rgveda itself does not explicitly mention whether the Kusika family was originally Kshatriya. But the Aitareya Brahmana<sup>1</sup> refers to Sunahsepa, the adopted son of Visvamitra, as succeeding to the lordship of the Jahnus as well as to the divine lore of the Gadhis. Modern scholars refer to the family of Visvamitra as the Jahnus<sup>2</sup> of Kanyakubja. The Panchavimsa Brahmana<sup>3</sup> definitely states that Visvamitra was originally a King. Some scholars are of opinion that the caste system had not crystalized in the age of the Rgveda and, therefore, the Pauranic account of the strivings of Visvamitra after Brahmanahood has no foundation in fact. But there are clear references in the Rgveda to the division of society into Varnas, and had there been no distinction between the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas, the later Vedic literature would not have taken pains to point out the Rajanya or Kshatriya origin of Visvamitra.

The Puranas and epics describe in great detail the struggle between Vasistha and Visvamitra, which spurred on the latter to attain the status of the Brahmana. It is related in the Ramayana<sup>5</sup> that once upon a time Visvamitra, the King of Kanauj, went out travelling. Having passed through many cities, forests and hills he arrived with his big retinue at the hermitage of Vasistha. He and his followers were offered there a sumptuous feast, all the dishes of which were prepared from the milk of a wonderful cow, Shabala. Visvamitra wanted to have this cow and offered a lac of cows in return to Vasistha. But the latter refused to part with the cow at any price. Thereupon, Visvamitra tried to take it forcibly but failed to do so on account of its magic powers. He then retired to the region of the Himalayas with a view to master the art and science of archery from Mahadeva. He succeeded in pleasing the Great Lord by austerities and learnt from him the science of archery with

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1. Aitareya Brahmana VII. 18. 9

2. K. M. Munshi, *Bharatiya Vidya*, May 1940, p. 158

3. Panchavimsa Brahmana, XXI. 12. 2

4. Yaska's *Nirukta*, II. 24

5. *Ramayana* Chaps. 50-70.

all its subsidiary branches. But even with these new weapons he failed to subdue Vasistha. He was completely routed by the superior scientific attainments of Vasistha. Visvamitra then lost his faith in mere physical prowess and resolved to become a Brahmana so that he might attain the spiritual knowledge and along with it the complete mastery over the elements. He went to a place on the upper course of the river Kausiki, the modern Kosi, which flows at present through the districts of Purneah and Bhagalpore. He performed there the severest austerities with the object of attaining his ends. Brahma became highly pleased with his penances and conferred upon him the title of Rajarsi. This, however, did not satisfy him, because he had not yet achieved the Bramhanahood. He, therefore, went further east to engage himself in deeper contemplation of the Higher Self. At long last he was able to realise the highest truth and attain the rank of the Brahmana. By virtue of his supreme knowledge he was recognised as a Brahmarshi<sup>1</sup>. The Mahabharata informs us that Visvamitra obtained the fulfilment of his highest desire on the bank of a lake (hrad) situated on the Udyanta-Parvata in the neighbourhood of Gaya. The Udyanta-Parvata is described as the place of revelation of the Savitri<sup>2</sup>, which forms a verse of the Rgvedic hymn composed by Visvamitra<sup>3</sup>. The Savitri or the Gayatri Mantra is universally recognised as the quintessence of the Vedic culture and every Bihari should feel pride in the fact that it was revealed in Bihar to a sage who made Sahabad his home.

### ROMANCE OF VISVAMITRA.

Visvamitra was a great sage, but, he too had to pass through the ordeals of temptation. He succumbed to the charms of the divine dancer, Menaka, and this makes his character more humane than

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1. Ramayana, I. 65

2. Mahabharata, III. 84, 93-143

3. The Gayatri Mantra, recited daily by the Brahmanas, is contained in the tenth verse of the last (62) hymn of the third Mandala of the Rgveda. Sir William Jones translated it thus "Let us adore the supremacy of that divine Sun, the godhead, who illuminates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understanding aright in our progress towards his holy seat."

ever. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata relate how Indra, the Lord of heaven, became afraid of the austerities practised by Visvamitra. He thought that Visvamitra must have been aiming at the Lordship of heaven. He therefore, requested the exquisitely beautiful heavenly dancer, Menaka, to employ her charms in distracting the attention of Visvamitra. Menaka was diffident of her power to lure such a mighty sage into a life of sensual pleasure. But the importunities of Indra and his assurance that he would create a romantic environment to help her in achieving her ends overcame her reluctance. Menaka, scantily attired, appeared before Visvamitra and began to dance in the most lascivious manner. The pent-up sex urge of Visvamitra, which had been starved so long but not yet completely sublimated, demanded an outlet. He caught hold of the girl and enjoyed her<sup>1</sup>. The Ramayana adds that Visvamitra, forgetful of his great mission, spent ten years in the company of Menaka. Sakuntala was born as a result of this association. Kalidasa, with his sure poetic instinct, has depicted the character of Sakuntala as at once bearing the stamp of her mother and father<sup>2</sup>. Like her mother, Menaka, she flirted with King Dusmyanta, contrived to meet him in secret and to have a son by him. But not unlike her father, she took to a life of severe self-denial when her husband refused to recognise her as his lawfully wedded wife. It was in the atmosphere of the hermitage that her son, Bharata, had his earliest training.

The slothful life of a sensualist could not satisfy long a creative genius like Visvamitra. He realised his folly and bidding adieu to his charmer repaired to the Himalayas, where he sought to gain complete mastery over his self. Indra tried to distract his attention again this time through another damsel, Rambha by name. The sage, however, had realised the value of conquering the elemental sex-urge. Rambha's allurements simply provoked his wrath and he cursed her. But having uttered the curse, Visvamitra found that anger is as much detrimental to self-realization as lust. He, therefore, resolved to root out all the passions and after a long time succeeded in gaining his ends.

1. Mbh. I. Ch. 72.

2. Kalidasa's *Abhijnanasakuntalam*.

## VISVAMITRA'S PART IN THE WAR OF THE TEN KINGS

Visvamitra played a leading part in the War of Ten Kings which constitutes a landmark in the history of Vedic India. Sudasa, son of Divodasa, belonging to the Tritsu family of North Panchala, had to fight for supremacy against the confederacy of ten kings. These kings were the leaders of the Anus, the Druhyus, the Yadus, the Turvasus, the Purus, the Alinas, the Sivas, the Vishavins, the Pakthas, and the Bhalanases. It is related in the Aitareya Brahmana<sup>1</sup> that Vasistha originally coronated Sudasa. Dr. Altekar infers from this that Vasistha was the first priest of Sudasa<sup>2</sup>. But he was later on substituted by Visvamitra. Visvamitra appears to have been an excellent strategist. In two of the verses of the third Mandala of the Rgveda, he relates how he escorted the formidable forces of Sudasa across the mighty rivers, Vipasa and Satadru. Having performed the difficult feat, the sage sings jubilantly:

The Warrior host, the Bharatas, fared over: the singer won  
the favour of the Rivers.

Swell with your billows, hasting, pouring riches. Fill full your  
channels, and roll swiftly onward.

So let your wave bear up the pins, and ye, O Waters, spare  
the thongs;

And never may the pair of Bulls, harmless and sinless, waste  
away<sup>3</sup>.

He spurs on the army to victory by addressing to them a speech which might evoke the envy of Napoleon before his first Italian campaign:

When Visvamitra was Sudas's escort, then Indra through the  
Kusikas grew friendly.

Like swans, prepare a song of praise-stones, glad in your  
hymns with juice poured forth in sacrifice.

Ye singers, with the gods, sages who look on men, ye Kusikas,  
drink up the Soma's savoury meath.

1. Aitareya Brahmana, VIII, 21.

2. Altekar—Presidential Address of the Ancient Indian History section, Calcutta History Congress.

3. Rv. III. 33-12,

Come forward Kusikas, and be attentive; let loose Sudas's horse to win him riches.

East, west and north, let the King slay the foemen, then at earth's choicest place perform his worship.

Praises to Indra have I sung, sustainer of this earth and heaven.

This prayer of Visvamitra keeps secure the race of Bharatas<sup>1</sup>.

Scholars hold that the war between Sudasa and the ten kings is referred to in the Mahabharata as the struggle between the Panchala King and Samvarana of Hastinapur<sup>2</sup>. The Mahabharata describes how Samvarana, being defeated by the Panchala King fled to a forest on the bank of the Indus and remained there hidden for a number of years. At last Samvarana induced Vasistha to accept the office of his family priest and regained royal power through his help.

#### VISVAMITRA'S RELATION WITH THE IKSHVAKU FAMILY

Visvamitra came in close relation with the princes of the Ikshvaku dynasty of Ayodhya. One of the illustrious kings of this dynasty was Trisanku, who desired to go to heaven in his earthly frame. Vasistha ridiculed this idea and tried to dissuade him from this mad project. The King then approached Vasistha's son Saktri, who simply cursed him. Thereupon, Trisanku went to Visvamitra, whose reputation for miraculous powers had spread far and wide and requested him to perform the sacrifice, as a result of which his heart's desire might be fulfilled. Trisanku had helped Visvamitra and his family during a famine<sup>3</sup> and, therefore, could expect some favours from him.

Visvamitra readily agreed to perform the sacrifice, though it was a most extraordinary one. Trisanku, began to ascend the heaven. But Indra hurled him down. Visvamitra, however, kept the King foisted on the air by virtue of the merit he had previously acquired.

1. Rv. III. 53. 9-12.

2. Mbh. I. 94. 35-38; Pargiter, Ancient Indian Historical Tradition p. 281; JRAS, 1910, Pp. 49-50.

3. Visnupurana 4. 3. 13-14; Devi Bhagvata 7. 13.

Trisanku was succeeded by his son Harischandra<sup>1</sup>. The Aitareya Brahmana and Devi Bhagavata state that for a long time Harishchandra had no son; and that he took a vow to the effect that if a son were born to him, he would sacrifice the child to God Varuna. In course of time he got a son, named Rohita, or Rohitasva. But he postponed the sacrifice of the boy for a long time on one plea or another. Meanwhile Rohitasva grew to manhood and having learnt of the vow of his father fled to the jungles, where he spent six years. At the end of this period he met a poor Brahmana, named Ajigarta, who had a numerous progeny. The Brahmana was prevailed upon to barter away the life of his second son, Sunahsepa, for one hundred cows. Varuna agreed to accept Sunahsepa as a sacrifice in the place of Rohitasva. Arrangements were made to bind Sunahsepa to a sacrificial wood and to consign him to flames. Despairing of his life the poor boy fell at the feet of Visvamitra who was officiating as a priest in the sacrifice<sup>2</sup>. Visvamitra took pity on him and taught him a mantra by reciting which he would be able to save himself. Sunahsepa invoked Varuna by addressing the hymn which has found a place in the first Mandala of the Rgveda<sup>3</sup>. Inspired by Visvamitra the boy sang piteously thus :

“Bound to three pillars captured Sunahsepa thus to the Aditya  
made his supplication,

Him may the Sovran Varuna deliver, wise, ne’er deceived,  
loosen the bonds that bind him.”

The life of the boy was spared and Visvamitra adopted him as his own son. It may be inferred that Visvamitra made a vigorous protest against the barbarity of human sacrifice and the Indo-Aryan society had thenceforth to content itself with the sacrifice of dumb animals.

1. Bhagavata IX. 7; But Kurma Purana p. 112, Vangavasi Edition, states that Satyabrata was the father of Harischandra. Harivamsa, XII. 7-17 says that the original name of Trisanku was Satyabrata.

2. Bhagavata, IX. 7. 22-25; Aitareya Brahmana VII. 16; Sankhayana Srautasutra 13. 7.

3. Rv. I. 24.

King Harischandra, later on performed a Rajasuya sacrifice and engaged Visvamitra as his priest. The sage wanted to test the character of the King and asked for a suitable fee from him. Harishchandra offered him his whole kingdom and gave away his wife and son as slaves. This story has been described with rare poetic embellishments in the Ramayana, Markandeya Purana and Devi Bhagavata<sup>1</sup>.

#### FAMILY OF VISVAMITRA.

Madhuchandas, the eldest son of Visvamitra, is the author of the first hymn of the Rgveda. Visvamitra had many others sons. But he ordered them to accept Sunahsepa as their eldest brother. Sunahsepa was given the name of Devarata, "Protected by the God." The Harivamsa says that all the sons of Visvamitra were illustrious<sup>2</sup>. Amongst them special mention is made of Devasravah, Kati, Galava, Maudgalya and Salankyana. They became the founders of many of the Gotras or clans of the Brahmanas.

1. Markandeya Purana 1.7.6; Devi Bhagavata 7. 12-23.

2. Harivamsa l. 32. 52-59.

# ROHITASVA

By

(Prof. Bhuvaneswarnath Misra, 'Madhava' M.A. (English & Hindi))

On the hill of Rohtas, about 2½ miles south of Sasaram there are temples dedicated to the memory of Prince Rohitasva and his illustrious father Harischandra which stand as a great monument to this family's closest connection with the district of Shahabad<sup>1</sup>. The name of Harischandra is a living symbol of Truth and Justice in as much as he did not spare his wife even when she carried her deceased son to the burning ghat where Harischandra had been stationed by his master to collect toll from the mourners and demanded for his master a portion of her sari even, which alone constituted the shrouding sheet of the corpse. We also know, that the whole series of events was a mere trial and test which the gods had put before that blessed apostle of Truth and once he had passed through the ordeal he was blessed with the beatific vision of the Lord. Hence goes the saying, 'The Sun and the Moon may leave their path but never will Harischandra swerve from Truth' "

Harischandra belonged to the Solar race to which did Māndhātā<sup>2</sup>, Ikshvaku and Ramchandra belong and he was the son of Trishanku whose father was Satyavrata and grandfather Tribandhana. By the curse of Vasistha, Trishanku became a Chandala and pauper<sup>3</sup>. In the Hindu mythology there is a very interesting legend with regard to Rohitāśva

In the Aitareya Brāhman<sup>4</sup> we find that Harischandra had no child and fearing lest he should die childless he began to pray to God to grant him a son, for, according to the Hindu Sastras however virtuous a man may be, he could not hope to attain salvation if he

1 Archaeological survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. 21, page 146-176.

2 Bhāgavat IX, vii. 8.

3 Devi Bhāgavata VII, xiii.

4 i. 44.



died without a male heir<sup>1</sup>. So Harischandra prayed and prayed and engaged himself in a severe *Tapas* and at length his prayers were heard. Varuna, the god of waters<sup>2</sup>, granted him the boon that a son would be born to him provided he promised to offer the boy as a sacrifice to the gods. Harischandra promised to act accordingly and the gods had no reason to doubt his integrity. Thereafter Śaibya, the wife of Harischandra, conceived and in due time a son was born to them. This was Rohitasva. Now Varuna appeared and asked Harischandra to redeem his promise. Harischandra, however, succeeded in evading the calamity by saying that he would most certainly offer his son in a sacrifice but as his wife was yet in the *Sūtikāgriha*, it would not be proper to perform the *Naramedha* sacrifice until his wife had also been purified in a month. Varuna agreed to it saying that he would appear after a month and enjoined that in the meanwhile the *Jatakarma* and *Namakarma* Sanskaras<sup>3</sup> should have been finished. After these Sanskaras

1 'अनुव्रजस्य गतिर्नास्ति'

2 R.K. Samhita i 136. 2.; Shukla Yayurveda X. vii—'पत्यासु चक्रे वरुणः सधस्थपाउँ शिशुर्मानृतमास्वतन्तः' Mahidhar while commenting on the above mantra says: 'या ऐर्वाविधा आपस्तासु अन्तर्मध्ये वरुणो देवः सधस्थं सहस्थानं चक्रे कृतवान् सह स्थीयते यस्मिन् तत् सधस्थं । किम्भूतो वरुणः अपां शिशुः बालक अपो वा एव शिशुर्मवति ये राजसूयेन यजत इति श्रुतेः किम्भूता स्वसु पत्यासु । पत्यमिति गृहनामसुपठितम् । गृहस्थासु सर्वेषामाधारत्वान् तथा मानृतमासु अतिशयेन जगन्निर्मात्रोप' ।

In the Taitariya Brahmana III, i, ii, 7 we have चत्रस्य राजा वरुणोधि राजः—here 'चत्र' means powerful and not any particular caste. Elsewhere also he is called a 'चत्रिय'—'आराजानामह कृतस्य गोपा सिन्धुपती चत्रिया यातमर्वाक' RK Samhita vii LXV 2.

3 संस्करोति इति संस्कारः—Kamshitaki I, ii, 6; Chhandogya IV xvi 2, 3, 4; Brihadaranyak VI, iii, 1. उत्कर्षसाधनं संस्कारः—Panini VI, i, 137.

After the birth of a child the first Sanskar is 'Jatakarma' which has two aspects—'प्रज्ञाजनन' and 'आयुष्य'; the first is for the wellbeing of the intellectual life of the child and the second for its longevity. The father of the child prays to god—'अभ्याभवं परशुर्भव हिरण्यमश्रुतं भव'—Paraskar Grihyasutra I. xvi, 14. Let my child become strong as adamant, sharp as spear, sparkling as gold. Namakarana Sanskar commences after the Jatakarma. In the Namakarana Sanskar the child is given a name which has a lasting influence on his life and therefore this Sanskar is very prominent :

नामाखिलस्य व्यवहार हेतुः शुभावहं कर्तुं भाग्यहेतुः ।

नामैव कीर्तिं लक्षणे मनुष्यस्ततः प्रशस्तं खलु वासकर्म ॥

were performed Varuna again appeared and demanded the sacrifice, whereon the king said that as the child had not yet teethed and also as according to the injunctions of the Sastras a toothless animal cannot be sacrificed, he prayed that the sacrifice be stayed till the child had teethed. When again Varuna appeared, Harischandra prayed for a further span of time when the *Chudākarama Sanskar*<sup>1</sup> would have been over. Even after the expiry of this period Harischandra was not willing to part with his only son and when this time Varuna appeared he imploringly prayed to him to wait until the Upanayana<sup>2</sup> and the *Samavartana*<sup>3</sup>. Thus Harischandra, by one excuse or another, could stay the sacrifice till Rohitasva reached the age of ten. Fearing the consummation of it very soon, Rohitasva fled away to, and lived for several years in, the forest and hills now called Rohtas in the south east corner of the Shahabad District. When Varuna appeared before the king for the promised sacrifice

- 1 Chudakarana is the fifth of the sixteen main Sanskaras of a Dwij. This is performed after the Annaprasana which is performed when a child has begun teething. The Chudakarana is performed for the long life, grace and bliss of the child—तेन ते आयुषेवपामि दुष्लोकाय स्वस्ते

—Ashwalayan grihyasutras I, xvii, 12.

- 2 Upanayana is the second birth of the man where after he is called 'dwij' or twice born. Here commence the education of the child under a guru who must be श्रोत्रिय and ब्रह्मनिष्ठ—i e. well versed in the vedas and also established in the Brahma—the Cosmic Power. Here he enters into the state of a Brahmachari—which combines in itself the study of Vedas and also the realization of the supreme Truth. When he commences his study of the Vedas, a sacred thread is given to him reminding him of his three fold duties to Devas, to Rishis and to the Manes. His head is shaved and he has now to remain under a very strict discipline of a Brahmachari.
- 3 Samavartana is performed when a student has finished his studies of the Vedas and has fully satisfied his guru of his learning and conduct and when the Guru allows him to enter into Grihastha dharma after marrying a suitable girl. Here he enters into the real fold of social life and his learning and discipline give him strength and light to true life in all its richness and fulness. But it was not compulsory for every Brahmachari to enter into a householder's life. If he wants to continue as a Naisthika Brahmachari and devote his life to the study of Vedas and in the attainment of Brahman-vidya by Tapaṣ and Brahmachaya he was free to choose that.

—Manusmirti II. 243,

Harischandra told him that the whereabouts of the child were untraceable. Varuna got enraged and cursed him to suffer a fell disease.

Having come to know of this curse of Varuna, Rohitasva wanted to return to his father and be sacrificed but Indra stood in his way saying that it was foolish to enter into the snare of kingship and that it was rather desirable that he should keep wandering during the exile. For not less than six times did Rohitasva attempt to go back to his father but all these times he was prevented by Indra. It was Indra alone who knew his whereabouts and who gave him fullest protection. Indra is a very jealous god and only he might have protected Rohitasva to belittle Varuna.

But Rohitasva's heart was on fire. He could not bear the tragic state of his father and was keen on finding out a solution. He came to the hermitage of the sage Ajganta, the son of Sukharas and promised to give him a hundred cows if he would give one of his sons for the sacrifice. The sage gave his second son Sunahseph and with him the prince returned to his father. Varuna was now happy to find in exchange a Brahmin boy and he himself became the Sprinkler of the Rajasūya, in which Viswamitra became *Hotā*, Jamadagni, *Adhoaryu*, Vasistha, Brahma and Ayasga, *Udgāta*. Eventually Suanhseph was also saved by Vishwamitra by giving a mantra propitiating Varuna. By the repetition of this mantra Varuna became glad and he let go suanhseph. The king, the young prince Rohitasva and Suanhseph were all blessed by Varuna<sup>1</sup>. In the end Vishwamitra accepted Suanhseph as his son.

In the Aitamyā Brahmana vii. 13. as also in the Sankhyā Brahman xv. 17. we have a full description of the Yajna performed by Harishchandra, the tying of Sunahseph to the Sacrificial Yupa and the difficult and of delicate position of Rohitasva. We have also a detailed account of the Mantra given by Vishwamitra to Surahseph and finally the adoption of the latter by the former as a son. In the Matropanisad I. 4. where we have the reference to the said story we see that Vishwamitra is called 'Rajarshi' and not 'Brahmarshi'. For a still fuller account vide Kurma Purana Chap. xxxi-xxxiii and Devi Bhagavata Shandh vii, Chap. xii-xxvii; Brahma Purana Chap. 8 and 104; Padma purana, Sristikhand Chap. viii. Srimad Bhagwat ix. vii. 7-8., ix. xvi. 18; . 72. 21; Skandh Purana Nagarkhand and Hatakeswar Mahatmya,

Vishwamitra was ever jealous of Vasistha and when the latter in the above said Yajña of Harischandra got plenty of Dakshiṇā in the form of cows, cloths, precious jewels etc. Vishwamitra got annoyed. He sought an opportunity to test the liberality of Harischandra. And it once so happened that Harischandra gave away all his kingdom to Viswamitra as promised in a dream and was left nothing to give in Dakshiṇā which it is customary to give after every Dāna. At this juncture he had to sell himself to a Chāṇḍāl. His wife and son were also sold to a Brahmin. Rohitasva was bitten by a snake while he had gone to fetch Samidha (sacrificial fuel) for the Brahmin. The tragic catastrophe can better be imagined than described. The mother Shaibya, whose other name was Mādhavi came to the burning ghat for the last rites of his dead child and was bewailing her cursed lot as she could not arrange for the cover of his dead body. Harischandra watched the Smaśān, and as usual demanded of his wife, whom he did not recognise, a portion of the cover as was the custom that time. Shaibya had nothing to give. When they recognised each other, they could not withstand the tragedy and consequently fell senseless on the ground.

A funeral pyre was, however arranged and the dead body of Rohitasva was placed on it. Now in this sad calamity both husband and wife began to think of the Lord. 'All difficulties are solved by taking rest in the Divine's arms, for these arms are always opened with love to shelter us. Without the Divine, life is a painful illusion, with the Divine all is bliss. Rohitasva was brought to life by the divine grace and flowers from above were showered on the blessed couple who had gone through the trial and tribulations so cheerfully. Rohitasva was crowned the king-emperor of Ajodhya and Harischandra in a divine chariot flew to Heaven, to God who is our home.

The Rohtasva temple stands to-day on the top of a steep conical promontory at Rohtas. The *Mandapa* of the temple and the upper portion of the *Sikhara* tower have vanished. But the little that remains of the temple testifies to its former grandeur and beauty. The terrace on which the temple was raised measures 91 feet 6 inches east to west and 54 feet north to south. A grand stair case containing 83 steps leads to the temple. The Archaeological Survey

Report thus describes the ruins of the ancient temple. "The plinths of the temple and porch are both relieved with bold horizontal mouldings. In plan the sanctum is a square of 28 feet outside. Each side of the square breaks forward in 4 small projections, like the Orissa temples, and on the central projections are carved small figures of fighting elephants. The walls are decorated with bold mouldings broken by deep vertical grooves and horizontal chases—which combine to produce an artistic effect of light and shade."

Rohitasva and his successors maintained close relation with Bihar. According to the Bhagwata Purana the son of Rohitasva was Harit, whose son was Champa. Champa is described in this Purana as the founder of the city of Champa<sup>2</sup>, which is situated in the district of Bhagalpur.

1. List of ancient monuments in B & O 1931. P. 169.
2. Bhagavata IX. 8.

# BANABHATTA

By

Prof. Nalinvilochan Sharma M.A. (Sanskrit & Hindi)

## HIS HOME

The land whose boundaries constitute the modern district of Shahabad has a glorious and unique tradition of physical prowess combined with intellectual accomplishment. Talking of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, one of the greatest prose-writers of India, hailing from this part of the country, one is reminded that it is Shahabad which has the distinction of producing Sadal Miśra, the father of modern Hindi Prose. It is not without interest to note also that three front-ranking living writers of Hindi, namely, Pt. Nanda Kishore Tiwari, Babu Shivapujan Sahay and Raja Radhikaraman Singh, well known for exquisite and powerful if ornate prose, belong to this district. Shahabad can thus claim a proud heritage of rich literary prose the continuity of which is unbroken.

Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the remote spiritual fountainhead of this tradition, was born in the Vatsyāyana Brahmin community whose hereditary family seat was a village called Prītikūṭa<sup>1</sup> to the west of the great river Hiraṇyabāhu, popularly known as Śoṇa<sup>2</sup>. In the vicinity of the village Prītikūṭa there were two other villages called Mallakūṭa and Yaṣṭigṛha beyond which lay the country under the suzerainty of King Harṣa<sup>3</sup>.

## A LIFE-SKETCH

Fortunately for us, unlike other writers of Sanskrit, Bāṇabhaṭṭa has left ample and outspoken auto-biographical material in the introductory chapters of the Harṣacarita and the prefatory verses to the Kādambarī. With the help of this material available to us we can easily reconstruct his illustrious geneology and his life which is full of gusto, romance and adventure at the beginning but sedate, scholarly and saintly later on.

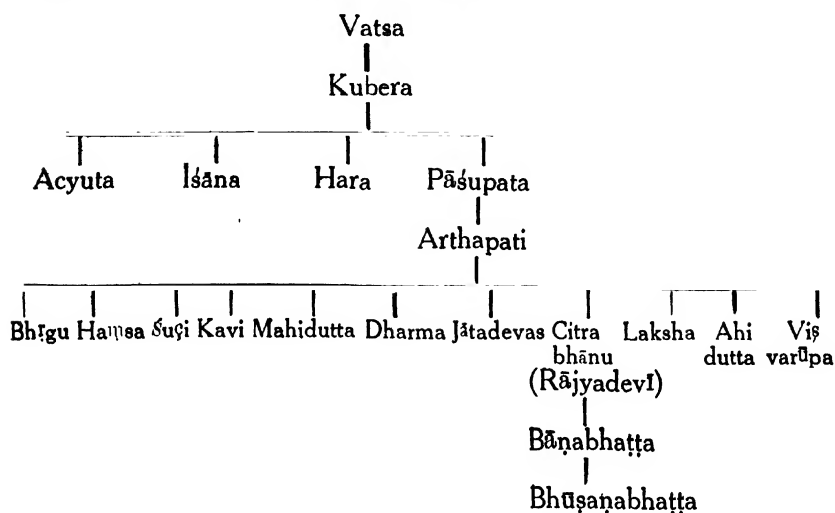
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1. Harṣacarita—Prathma Uṣhvāsa.

2. Ibid.

3. Harṣacarita—Prathma Uṣhvāsa.

Although details are not lacking about his forefathers, about whom he speaks in the highest terms, we shall have to be satisfied here with the bare geneological table given below<sup>1</sup> :—



The story of his early life, however, is too interesting to be bypassed. The mother of Bāṇa died young and he lost his father, who was, in his own words, like a very mother to him, when he was a mere lad of fourteen years. It must have been this grief, branded on his tender memory, which inspired him to paint so vividly the pathetic picture of the young parrot in the *Kādambarī*<sup>2</sup>.

In the circumstances, it is no wonder that the inevitable streak of Bohemianism in him, with which genius is usually associated in all lands and times, found an opportunity to come into play. He was veritably seized with wander-lust and he left his comfortable home in dubious though artistic company to visit strange and new lands. He was accompanied, in his wanderings, by his friends among whom were poets, painters, singers, musicians, actors, Jain and Brahmin mendicants, physicians and loxicologists and many other men and women accomplished in the different arts and sciences. He exposed himself by this action to the ridicule of his

1. Ibid.

2. *Kādambarī* (Ed. by Kale) M 49—64.

neighbours but returning as a mature man grown rich in experience and wisdom he had no difficulty in redeeming his reputation<sup>1</sup>.

Back at Prêtikūṭa after sowing wild oats Bāna followed in the footsteps of his predecessors. He found no difficulty in being recognised as the head of the Vātsyāna clan of Brahmins and he spent some time peacefully at home performing sacrifices in accordance with the injunctions of the holy scriptures without losing interest in the various fine arts<sup>2</sup>.

It was during this period that Bāna was summoned to the court of King Harsavardhana by the friendly Prime-minister Kṛṣṇagupta. He was received with marked coldness by the king who went to the length of dubbing him as a fop and dandy in his hearing<sup>3</sup>. Through the good offices, however, of the Prime-minister Bāna succeeded in securing the favours of the king in no time. He stayed at the Imperial court for a considerable time honoured duly by the king for his scholarly achievements.

Feeling home-sick he sought the royal permission to visit his people. His relations finding him once more in their midst, pressed him to narrate the life and history of Harṣa as he was not only a mighty emperor but was also known for his piety and virtue and enjoyed wide popularity<sup>4</sup>.

## HIS WORKS

It was thus in pursuance of the wishes of his relations that Bāna undertook to write the biography of Harṣa. The only other work of Bāna about the authenticity of which there is no controversy is the Kādambarī. It is difficult to say which of the two works was written first as, by a strange irony of fate, both of them are left incomplete. It is some consolation that the able son of Bāna, Bhūṣaṇabhaṭṭa<sup>5</sup> or Bhaṭṭa Pulina<sup>6</sup> has made an attempt of sorts to

1. Harṣaṣarita—Prathma Uṣchvāsa. 2. Harṣaṣarita—Dvitiya Uṣchvāsa.

3. Ibid—“Mahānayaṃ bhujaṅgh”. 4. Ibid—Tritiya Uṣchvāsa.

5. Harṣaṣarita—Prathma Uṣchvāsa

6. Tilakamanjari of Dhanapāla—

‘केवलमपि स्फुरन् बाणः करोति विमदान्कवीन ।

किं पुनः कृम्यसंधानः पुञ्जिन्दकृतसंनिधि ॥



complete the immortal if unfinished Kādambari of his father in the Uttara-Kādambari.

Some other works are also popularly ascribed to Bāṇa, viz., Caṇḍīśataka and the plays Pārvatipariṇaya and Mukutātāḍikā<sup>1</sup> due to the same confusion of similar names which has led scholars to ascribe a number of works of inferior and obviously late origin to such a renowned poet as Kālidāsa. The German scholar R. Schmidt, however, has rightly pointed out<sup>2</sup> that a superficial glance at the internal evidence supplied by these works is sufficient to convince anybody that such feeble and loose writings can not be expected from the facile pen of a writer of Bāṇa's calibre. As Schmidt goes on to prove the fact of the matter is that the writer of Caṇḍīśataka and Pārvatipariṇaya was another and later Bāṇa, whose full name was Vāwana Bhaṭṭa Bāṇa and who flourished in the fifteenth century. It is this Bāṇa who also wrote Nalābhyudaya and Vemabhūpalacarita.

### THE LITERARY MERITS OF HIS WORKS THE HARṢACARITA.

The Harṣacarita is rightly regarded as the first biographical work in Sanskrit dealing with a historical figure. There is no dearth of history, as Indians understood the science<sup>3</sup>, from quite early times. When we call the Harṣacarita the first historical work in Sanskrit we simply mean that it revolves round a historical figure and not an imaginary hero and that it has a historical background. The work, nonetheless, is essentially not even a biography but, to use the modern term a historical novel or period novel and its merits must be assessed with this fact in mind.

When Keith indicts the work as of "miniwal value"<sup>4</sup> historically, he forgets that being a historical novel it need not concern itself

1. Bhaṭṭa Mathurānātha Śāstrī in his Introduction to the Kādambari (Nirnaya Sagar Press Edition)

2. Abhandlunger für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XIII, 4, 1917.

3. The Indian ideal of history is:—

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणामुपदेश समन्वितम् ।

पूर्ववृत्तं कथायुक्तमितिहासं प्रचक्षते ॥

4. A History of Sanskrit Literature p. 318.

entirely with historical characters and historical happenings. A historical novel may be expected to do so, of course. On the other hand, it may very well do no more than present an invented story developed by means of even imaginary characters if they are simply set against a real background to which the story and the characters bear some real and convincing relationship. This is the most charitable view on the scope of a historical novel. Harṣa, to his credit, simply blends events that are real with events that are occasionally imagined though reasonably and logically imagined. We also find in his work characters that actually lived along with characters he has invented. Historical works remain lifeless records without these devices and the Harṣacarita is classified by critics as an Ākhyāyika which stands for the modern historical novel.

Even as a biography the Harṣacarita is of great utility for the scholar reconstructing the history of India at the time of King Harṣa. Chronology is not its strong point; there may be other deficiencies also. But on the positive side it supplies abundant material for the reconstruction of the social, cultural and religious aspects of the times. One can have a clear insight into the customs, manners and morals of the people of those days by a careful study of the Harṣacarita and one can only wish that such material could be available for other periods of Indian history—before and even after Harṣa.

The fact of the matter is that even as a biographer, the literary artist in Bāṇa is never thrown in the background. Like a true literary biographer he works from the core to the circumference seizing the character and then dramatising for us just those scenes where the chosen actor may fulfil his role—just this much and no more.

History of the purely political type may demand of this work material for the battle which Harṣa won and lost, the latter being more important than the former<sup>1</sup>; it may indict Bāṇa for not having

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1. (a) He had to face defeat at the hands of the Chalukya King Pulakesin II in his campaign in the South (विगलित हयं हयं चकार: Ahiole Inscription.)
  - (b) Harṣa obviously failed also to exterminate Śaśāṅka the King of Gaṇḍa who was responsible for the tragedy of Rājya-Śrī, the beloved sister of

clearly given the identification of the king of Malwa or the Gaṇḍa king Śaśaṅka<sup>1</sup>; but Bāṇa has brought to the surface the drama of the career of Harṣa very effectively. The real dramatic element of the life of Harṣa was not his conquests or defeats nor the spectacular religious assemblies which he held after being converted to Buddhism. It was the tragic fate of Rājya-Śrī, too well-known to be repeated here, against which, ironically enough, the mighty Harṣa was powerless which Bāṇa selected for his central theme with the unerring instinct of the great artist that he was. He accomplished what he undertook; there is no point in blaming him for what he never intended to do.

### THE KĀDAMABARĪ

The Kādambārī in particular, and the style of Bāṇa in general, has been subjected to much adverse criticism by Occidental scholars. To take only one example, here is an extract from the pen of the German scholar Weber about the Kādambārī: "Bāṇa's prose is an Indian wood where all progress is rendered impossible by the undergrowth until the traveller cuts out a path for himself and where, even then, he has to reckon with malicious wild beasts in the shape of unknown words that affright him<sup>2</sup>."

Without being facetious it is interesting to visualize the reactions of this scholar had he lived in the twenties of this century and come across a copy of *Ulysses* or *Finnegan's Wake* of James Joyce, the English novelist, about whose prose worse things may be said and have been said by unsympathetic scholars of the same language although, on the other hand, there is no dearth of champions for the literary experiments and innovations of the writer.

One must remember in this connection that literary or artistic ideals differ fundamentally in the same country in different times, not to speak of different countries having independent and distinctive cultures of their own. It was because this fact was not kept in view

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Harṣa. There is sufficient proof for this statement in the archaeological remains of Śaśaṅka who continued to rule in the extreme East contemporaneously with Harṣa—a fact nowhere mentioned in the Harṣaṣarita.

1. Criticism levelled against Bāṇa by Keith—*A History of Sanskrit Literature*.
2. Quoted by Peterson in the Introduction to his Edition of the Kādambārī.

that some of the pioneers of the Indic studies failed to understand and appreciate the underlying expressionism of Indian painting and sculpture and criticised them in derogatory terms. Indians, in their turn, have often been carping critics of the realism of European art. Time and mutual understanding have proved that both were wrong. Renaissance Indian art has gained in strength by imbibing European realism and Matisse and other modern French masters have frankly confessed the influence of Indian expressionism on their art.

It is time that ancient Indian literature be examined afresh in the same spirit by foreign scholars to whom it is deeply indebted otherwise—for its critical editions, translations, nay, for its very revival and survival to speak the truth.

To come back to the point, the peculiarities of the style of Bāṇa must be studied with some modification in modern ideals for good writing. Ernest Hemingway, one of the foremost fiction writers of modern times enunciates this ideal succinctly when he says "Good writing is architecture, not interior decoration." About Bāṇa it has to be modified to something like this "Good writing is architecture as well as interior decoration."

In short the architecture of the Kādambarī has the same complexities, subtleties and the total grandeur for which Indian architecture is only too well-known. It has at the same time 'purple patches', conscious as well as unconscious, as its interior decoration which has some of the charms of Indian painting the appeal of which may easily be lost on men not familiar with its intrinsic ideologies.

Tagore has spoken of this feature in his inimitable way when he compares the rich descriptions in the Kādambarī with a series of gorgeous pictures mounted on golden frames. As he says, in conclusion, the reader who wants to relish the pictures must also pay attention to the beauty of the frame<sup>1</sup> (the language) otherwise the total impression is sure to suffer in intensity.

# SHER SHAH

By

(Prof. Bhakat Prasad Mazumdar M. A.)



Bihar has the proud privilege of producing two of the greatest emperors of India—Asoka and Sher Shah. Though born<sup>1</sup> in Hissar<sup>2</sup> in the Punjab, Sher Shah spent his boyhood and youth at Sasaram, made Bihar the centre of his activity and selected Sasaram in the district of Shahabad as the place of his eternal sleep.

## AS A MAN.

The age in which Sher Shah spent his youth was one of chaos, anarchy and confusion. It was out of these disjointed elements that his genius was able to create a new empire and set the pattern of administration to Akbar. Babar had won victory over Ibrahim Lodi at the field of Panipath in 1526 and founded the Mughal dynasty. But he lived for four years only after his victory and could not strengthen the position of the infant empire. Immediately after his death there was a clash of interests between Kamran, Hindal, Askari and Humayun. The Afghans, having no leader, and no common ends, were frittering away their energy in petty revolts and mutual

There has been considerable difference of opinion among historians regarding the date of birth of Sher Shah. Prof. Qanungo in his 'Sher Shah' p. 3 and Garrett and Kohli in 'History of India' Part II, p. 160, observe that he was born in 1486 and Sir Wolseley Haig in Cambridge History of India, Vol. IV. p. 45, puts the date in 1489. But Prof. Paramatma Saran in JBORS, Vol. XX, pt. I, pp. 113-120 thinks that his birth occurred as early as 1472, as indicated by Abbas and confirmed by a Persian Manuscript compiled in 1839 A. D. entitled 'Nashā-i-Jāmi-Jam- (Chart 5, Sertal No. 16) and 'Āsār-as-Sanādīd' by Sir Saiyed Ahmad Khan (Page 36, Chap. 1).

K. R. Qanungo "Sher Shah" p. 3 But Prof. Parmatma Saran in JBORS, Vol XX, pt. I, p. 121 on the basis of 'Abbas Sarwani' S 'Tarikh-Sher Shah', 'Makhzan-i-Afghana' of Niamat Ullah and Dorn's translation of the Makhzan, maintains that Farid was born in the Parganah of Bhajwara (Punjab). In support of his theory he says that Farid's birth occurred during his grandfather's stay in the Pargana of Bhajwara and before his transfer to Narnaul, and moreover even after leaving Bhajwara. Ibrahim did not settle in Hissar Feroza but in Narnaul. "So there is no evidence to show that Farid was born in Hissar".

dissensions. Bihar Khan Lohani had raised his banner against Ibrahim Lodi and soon after the victory of Babar, he assumed the title of Sultan Muhammad with Bihar as his domain. But he was not recognised as the leader of the Afghans. Jalal Khan, the de jure sovereign of Bihar was mean enough to plot for the murder of Sher Shah. Even the members of Sher's family, specially his step mother employed all sorts of foul devices to keep off Farid from home. Farid as he was then called, first of all made his paternal possession secure by the help of Junaid Khan Bulas. Then he strengthened his position as the Governor of Bihar and finally united all the Afghans before his invasions on Bengal in 1533. He next defeated Humayun in the battles of Chausa and Kanauj. In order to stabilise his position in Northern India he led expeditions against the Rajputs and humbled the power of the Baloch leaders. Thus he became the Emperor of Delhi. He fulfilled the quality of a great man, as has been beautifully summed up by John Stuart Mill—"one vision with a belief is a social power equal to ninety-nine persons who have only interests"—the vision of establishing the unity of the Afghans and establishing a new empire.

Though Sher Shah did not possess the magic that Napoleon exercised over the minds of men, nor the divine favour with which Cromwell inspired his followers, yet he had in him unparalleled bravery—the prime requisite for a soldier of fortune. He could plunge in an action without being deterred by consequences and yet manage the situation with statesmanlike wisdom.

The spirit of a soldier instigated Sher Shah to put the garrisons of Raisin and Marwar to sword, but the spirit of an administrator prompted him at moments to pardon deadly enemies. After having completely routed Muhammad Khan Sur, he sought reconciliation with him, though the latter had used all possible intrigues to oust Sher Shah from his paternal property. Sher Khan allowed him to resume his estate at Chaund. The next illustration of his admirable self-restraint is noticed in the case of Bakhshu Langāh, who in conjunction with Hindu Baloch had been governing the city and district of Multan after the flight of Humayun from India. Though the fort of Multan was captured and Hindu Baloch was put to death by

Haibat Khan, the Afghan commander of Sher Shah's army, yet Sher Shah ordered him to spare the lives of Bakhshū Langāh and his son, and to restore to them their lands.

Sher Shah was an indefatigable worker. From morning till evening Sher Shah's only anxiety was that there should be no corruption in the government, and that the people might not suffer at the hands of corrupt officials. He rose early, bathed and offered prayers. He started his day by giving audience to his secretaries, and other big officials. Then he used to hear the report of spies and news-agents. These meetings enabled him to issue his orders of the day. Then the nobles and commanders of the army presented themselves and soon afterwards began the Court of Sher Shah, in which he used to dispense justice impartially<sup>1</sup>. After the administration of justice according to his chroniclers, he used to brand every horse himself<sup>2</sup>. The treasury next claimed his attention. "The cash in hand in different Hakumats and the money remitted therefrom would be reported and commented upon." Then began the checking of the amount of revenue collected by the collectors of crown lands. The applications for high posts in the State were looked into and the applicants were interviewed by him. "After thus working for most of the time Sher Shah would call it a day and retire to rest to face another equally arduous day<sup>3</sup>." He could not ever think of rest in his lifetime. He seems to have said to himself, "Rest? Shall I have not all eternity to rest in?" It was the romance of a life of action that moved him and not the philosophy of "wise passiveness."

### ADMINISTRATION.

An autocratic masterfulness has been his governing principle. Sher Shah has been aptly described as a benevolent despot. Like Frederick the Great of Prussia, he was great as a conqueror as well as an administrator. His administrative system has won applause

1. *Khulāsat-ut-Twārīk* of Sujān Rāi, p. 322.

2. *Tārīkh-i-Dāudi* by Abdullah, Sir J. N. Sarkar's Ms p. 109; *Tārīkh-i-Sher Shāhī* by 'Abbās', p. 144; *Waqia-i-Mushtaqi* in Elliot and Dowson's 'History of India', Vol. V, p. 550.

3. *Tārīkh-i-Sher-Shāhī* p. 141, 142; *Tārīkh-i-Dāudi*, Sir J. N. Sarkar's Ms. p. 189-92

from British historians. Mr. Keene observes that, "no government—not even the British has shown so much wisdom as this Pathan<sup>1</sup>." Sher Shah is to be credited for his wisdom in enunciating the principles of administration and not for the working of the system. It is natural to think that it is not possible for a single man to administer a big empire like that of Sher Shah's. It is too much to expect from his subordinates that they would be as efficient, honest and hard working as their ruler. Moreover, Sher Shah had to spend most of his time from 1536 onwards in the fields of Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa, Rajputana and the Punjab and hence probably was not able to look into the details of administration as deeply as has been assumed by his chroniclers. Yet with all these handicaps, Sher Shah is to be credited for the wise and beneficent reforms in every conceivable branch of administration.

### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

He kept all the strings of government in his own hands. He had no ministers but kept secretaries, who were permanent heads of different departments. The number of secretaries were eight only. (1) Vakil<sup>2</sup> was the chief secretary and "seems to have been in the general charge of the secretariat establishment and probably dealt with such reforms as were not definitely assigned to any other department." (2) The Wazir was the highest officer of the revenue department. (3) Another officer was mainly concerned with the correct drafting of imperial orders. (4) The military secretary (whose duties can be compared to the Mughal Mir Bakshi) used to carry out the military policy and to pass the paybills of all officers (5) Mir Atish was the officer in charge of artillery. (6) The Sadar<sup>3</sup> was in charge of religious endowments and charities. He was the highest judicial officer below the Emperor. (7) Chief Qazi<sup>4</sup> was the chief judge in

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1. Türks in India, p. 42.

2. Vakil and Wazir are referred to by 'Abbās' as existing under Sher Shah. *Tārīkh-i-Shāhī*; Punjab Public Library Ms. p. 143.

3. As the Sadr and Muhtsib are referred to by Farista, 356 in the time of Selim Shah, it would not be wrong to presume that they were also employed in the time of the Shah.

4. *Tārīkh-i-Daudi*, Sir J. N. Sarkar's Ms. p. 204.



criminal cases and (8) the Muhtsib or Censor of Public Morals looked after the enforcement of the Prophet's commands. None of these officers had independent status. The control exercised by the emperor was so rigorous that no one could evade punishment on the strength of his rank or service. Sujān Rāi<sup>1</sup> has narrated stories of the ingenuity of Sher Shah in punishing negligent officers.

### PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.

As in the centre, so in the local government Sher Shah did not favour the division of authority and feared the growth of centrifugal forces. Thus the empire was divided not into provinces (except in Bengal<sup>2</sup> in the beginning of Sher Shah's rule) but into Sarkars and Parganahs only for fiscal purposes. These could never become real units of administration as was the case with Akbar's subahs<sup>3</sup>. The officers in charge of the sarkars and parganahs merely performed the duty of informing the Imperial Secretariat about the condition of the areas they were in charge of<sup>4</sup>. Abdullah and Abbās mention that in order to crush even the remotest danger of an uprising in any part of the country, Sher Shah employed military commanders, who were in charge of fifty garrison towns<sup>5</sup>.

There is divergence of opinion regarding functions of administrative officials of Sher Shah's parganas. Historians<sup>6</sup> agree about four officials Shiqdar, Treasurer, Hindi Writer and Persian Writer. Writers from Abbas Khan to Prof. Kalikaranjan Qanungo and

1. *Khulasat-ut-Tawārikh*, p. 322.
2. But later on when there appeared tendencies to acquire power and declaration of rebellion, Sher Shah subdivided the province of Bengal. Abbas in *Tārikh-i-Sher Shāhī* 121-122 informs us that in place of the Governor of Bengal, a theologian named Qazi Fasih was appointed. He used to supply all informations of the government to the Emperor.
3. Sarkar, "The Mughal Administration," p. 40.
4. *Tārikh-i-Dāudī* 192.
5. Akbar Nāmā I, p. 196; *Tārikh-i-Dāudī*, p. 193; *Tārikh-i-Sher Shāhī* p. 146-49. The following garrison towns are mentioned:—  
Rohtas, Dipalpur, Multan, Malot, Delhi, Sambhal, Qanoj, Gwalior, Biana, Ranthambhor, Chitor, Mandu, Chunar, Dhandhera, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Nagore, Lucknow, Kalpi and Bhajwara.
6. Waqiai Mustaqi p. 551 of Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV; Abbas p. 413-14.

Sarkar and Dutt have mentioned a Munsif-i-Munsifan or Chief Munsiff in a Sarkar<sup>1</sup>. But they have not referred to Munsiff in the Parganas, without whom it would be absurd to speak of a chief Munsiff. But curiously enough Dr. R P Tripathi in his book entitled "Some Aspects of Muslim Administration" supports the view of Prof. Qanungo and comes to the conclusion that the Munsiff was not employed in the administration. But this conclusion militates against the statement of Waqiai-Mustaki that in the Parganah there were "a Shikdar, a Munsiff, a Treasurer, a Persian Writer and Hindi Writer<sup>2</sup>." There must have been Munsiffs in the Parganahs. Abbās Khan himself says that the Munsiff was "appointed for examining the brands in the armies on the frontiers" and it was before him that "at the branding time every man came forward and showed his horse and rendered his account<sup>3</sup>." Branding of horses was necessary because garrisons referred to above were stationed within the jurisdiction of Parganahs.

Another anomaly arises in connection with the Amir and Amil of Abbas Khan<sup>4</sup>. Dr. H. N Sinha<sup>5</sup> has rightly pointed out that what exactly were the duties of the Amir and Shikdar as compared with those of the Amil, the Chaudhury and Muqaddam has nowhere been made clear. Prof. Sri Ram Sharma<sup>6</sup> suggests that the Muqaddams used to collect revenues in the villages

The Shikdar looked after the revenue collection, punished all lawlessness in connection with revenue collection and maintained peace and order. After collecting the revenue the Shikdar handed it over to the treasurer. The State maintained Hindi-knowing clerks, according to Abbās Khan and Waqiai-Mustaki for the purpose of preparing writs of demands and issuing receipts to the cultivators in each season. The Persian-knowing clerks sent copies of these demands and receipts to the Emperor for his perusal.

1. Abbas quoted in Elliot and Dowson's 'History of India as told by its own historians, Vol IV, p 413-14, Sarkar and Dutt p. 39.
2. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, p. 451
3. Ibid, p. 413.
4. Ibid.
5. IHQ, Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 167-168
6. IHQ, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 595.

Another officer mentioned by Abbas Khan<sup>1</sup> was the Amin, in charge of assessment and collection of revenue in the Parganah, and of deciding suits on rights in land.

Several villages formed a Parganah and several Paraganahs constituted a Sarkar. The Sarkar was administered by two officials-Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran and Munsif-i-Munsifan. The duty of the chief Shikdar was more to maintain peace and order in the Sarkar than to collect revenues. The duty of the chief Munsiff, according to Abbās Khan<sup>2</sup>, was to "watch the conduct of both of the Amils and the people so that the Amils should not oppress or injure the people or embezzle King's revenue; and if any quarrel arose among the King's Amils regarding the boundaries of the Parganahas they were to settle it." He also used to hear suits about rights in land.

When we analyse the functions of the officials in the Sarkars and and Praganahs we arrive at an obvious conclusion that they were concerned more with the assessment and collection of revenue and branding of horses than with the real administration of those units. They had also to keep the Emperor informed of the important fiscal and military problems. But Sher Shah was not satisfied even with such safeguards against rebellions. He employed his own spies and had his own postal arrangements. The rebellious desire of the Governor of Bengal in 1541 was at once reported to Sher Shah by his own spies and he was able to crush the rebellion soon. Again when Shajat Khan of Malwa misappropriated the land, he learnt it without much delay. Post offices were located in the serais<sup>3</sup>. Seventeen hundred inns spread all over the Suri Dominion. They provided shelter to travellers and royal messengers as well. In the stable and each serai two horses were always kept ready to carry the messengers of royal post. The efficiency of the postal runners have been testified to by Abbās<sup>4</sup>. In order to increase the swiftness of royal mails, Sher Shah constructed atleast four long roads<sup>5</sup>.

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1. Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi 12-18, 146.

2. Elliot and Dowson OP. cit. Vol. IV. p. 414.

3. Qanungo in his book entitled "Sher Shah" p. 392, has rightly remarked that these serais were "the veretable arteries of the empire."

4. OP. Cit. 121-22;

5. (1) Sonargaon to the Indus (2) Agra to Burhanpur (3) Agra to Jodhpur and (4) Lahore to Multan.

Another factor which was largely responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in the country was the control over army. He had under him, according to Abbas<sup>1</sup> 150,000 horses, 300 elephants, 20,000 bowmen and artillery and 113,000 soldiers stationed in the fifty garrisons. The same authority informs us that he kept a strict watch on the commanders<sup>2</sup>. They were not allowed even to marry according to their own choice. It was through the control over these commanders that he exercised an effective check on his soldiers. Two wrong theories have been put forward by scholars with regard to Sher Shah's command over the latter. Abdullah<sup>3</sup> remarks that the control over the soldiers was due to his presence at the time of recruitment. But it is impossible to believe that he could be present in all parts of his domain whenever a soldier was recruited. The other theory is that it was due to the system of branding of horses and taking down of descriptive rolls of soldiers. But Abbās<sup>4</sup> says that even branding of horses was occasionally excused to favoured captains. The only way that he could control his own soldiers was that he himself fixed their salary<sup>5</sup>.

Peace was further ensured by the attempts at prevention of crime. Sher Shah enforced the Kautilian<sup>6</sup> principle of local responsibility for local crimes. The Amil in the Sarkar, Shiqdar in the Parganah and the Muqaddam in a village were responsible for any theft or crime committed in their respective jurisdictions. If they failed to produce the culprits before the government, they were punished or had to make good the loss. The result was that travels became safe and crime of violence rare<sup>7</sup>. Nizamuddin says, "Such was the state of safety of highways that if any one carried a purse full of gold and slept in the desert for nights, there was no need for keeping watch."

1. OP. Cit., 146.

2. OP. Cit. p. 121-122.

3. *Tārīka-i-Dāudī*, Ms. p. 192.

4. *Tārīkh-i-Sher Shāhī* p. 138.

5. *Tārīkh-i-Dāudī* Ms. p. 192.

6. Kautilya's Arthasastra.

7. *Tārīkh-i-Sher Shāhī* p. 151-52.

There was also a regular chain of courts for punishing criminals. Death sentence was meted out to thieves<sup>1</sup>. Abul Fazl<sup>2</sup> informs us that criminals sentenced for life were sent to Piyashori, where "they died brackish water" Cases were generally decided according to Muslim law. In the villages there were Panchayats, which decided cases from their own knowledge of facts. Usually the Panchayats administered justice properly. They feared that their power would be taken away<sup>3</sup> if they failed to dispense justice properly. The Amin in the Parganah and the Munsif-i-Munsifan in the Sarkar used to hear suits about rights in land. Other civil cases involving blasphemy, heresy, sacrilege were tried by the Qazi and the Mir Adl. Criminal cases were decided by the chief Shikdar, Qazi and the Mir Adl. The chief Qazi<sup>4</sup> was the highest authority in criminal cases. His decision could only be set aside by a contrary interpretation. If it happened so, the Qazi was dismissed. Above all the courts stood the Emperor<sup>5</sup>. His was the highest court of appeal.

The establishment of inns, improved means of communication and even-handed justice widened the range of trade and commerce. Transit duties, which had been levied on the merchandise passing through every city<sup>6</sup>, were abolished. New, taxes were levied only at frontiers and at markets. The progress of commerce was further accelerated by silver and copper currency<sup>7</sup> which was characterised by a standard weight, uniform fineness and bilingual scripts-Hindi and Arabic.

1. Elliot, Waqiai-Mushiaqi, p. 421.

2. Ain-i-Akbari, Jarret's translation, Vol. II p. 123.

3 (a) Janam Sakk<sup>1</sup> of Guru Nanak, English translation of Trump's Adi. grantly p. ii.

4. Tārikh-i-Dāudī Ms. p. 204.

5. Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi p. 145-146

6. Elliot, Op. cit. p. 421.

7. Wright, Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum Calcutta, 84 to 109. Sir W. Haig in Cam Hist of India, Vol. IV, p. 51 surmises that the earliest known date of the striking of coin of Sher Shāh is 945 A. H. (May 1538-May 1539.) But he himself contradicts his own view in saying that it was after the battle of Chausa on June 26, 1539 that "Sher Khan now struck coins."

Sher Shah also helped scholars. Abbas and Abdulla mention that he resumed several grants of his predecessors and issued new orders<sup>1</sup> in favour of other learned men. He is said to have spent 500 Tolchas of gold daily through his Qazis and Mir-i-Adls.

Such a vast administrative machinery required money. It chiefly came from the revenue derived from land. Before Sher Shah it was based on the farming of taxes. The tax farmer undertook to supply a stated net income, instead of rendering complicated and detailed account of receipts and expenditures. But Sher Shah stands out "as the only ruler of Northern India" observes Moreland, "who is known to have acquired practical experience in the detailed work of assessing and collecting revenue." In his time measurement of land was adopted as the basic method for assessment of revenue. This involved the survey, measurement and record of the holdings of different cultivators. When the area under cultivation and the crops cultivated in the particular area were known, it was possible to estimate the demand of the State in kind.

But there were defects in the measurement itself. The unit of measurement was a rope, 32 digits long. It was liable to contract or lengthen.

Next arises the question of schedule of demand. We are told by Abbās<sup>2</sup> that the Muqaddam collected one-third of the produce for the State and left two-thirds for the cultivator. This one-third was demanded on the basis of the average produce of a land<sup>3</sup>. But authorities do not indicate whether this average yield of a land was based on a separate calculation for each agricultural tract or on a sum total of the produce of the Kingdom as a whole. If the latter principle<sup>4</sup> was adopted then it meant that it paid no heed to the differences in the yields of good, middling and bad lands in different parts of the country. Neither Abbās nor Abul Fazl say anything about the former principle. Though not based on contemporary

1. Abbās, *Op. cit.* 154; *Tārikg-i-D ud* Ms. 187; *Mushtāq* in Elliot, Vol. V p. 549.

2. 'Abbās, 145.

3. *Āin-i-Akbari* I.

4. Prof. Sharma thinks such in *IHQ*, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 591-92.

records, we may infer that due attention was paid to local differences. The political instability of the years intervening the years between 1545 and 1556 must have compelled the Sur rulers to give up the scheme.

An uniform method of assessment was not prevalent throughout the Kingdom. Abbas<sup>1</sup> informs us that lands were not measured in Multan, where one-fourth of the produce was taken as the land revenue. Even to-day complete measurement and survey of all the land under cultivation has not been found possible in Marwar and Mewar. What to speak of in the days of Sher Shah, when Rajputana was in revolt and those two states were conquered only a year before his death? Contemporary documents do not mention a record of survey and measurement in the Kumaon division. Similar was the condition in some parts of Bengal. When parts of Bengal were not measured in the spacious time of Akbar, it is too much to expect that Sher Shah had been able to do so in that province, which had rebelled as late as 1541. So in the face of these facts it is unreasonable to agree with Moreland<sup>2</sup>, that "experiments in assessment were made in the heart of the empire, from the Punjab to Bihar."

In matters of collection of revenue, Sher Shah appointed officers like Shikdars, Munsiffs, and Amins to see that the peasants were not forced to give more than the scheduled demand. But in the actual working of the system the principle was not always adhered to. The peasants had to pay certain additional cesses. Abbās<sup>3</sup> informs us that the peasants had to pay fees for measurement and collection.

Besides land revenue, other sources of income included : (1) Government control of mines and grant of monopolies (2) Judicial fines (3) Jizya (4) Pilgirmage tax (5) tax on goods for sale at the frontier and markets (6) ground rent from vendors in the market (7) excise tax on manufacture of sugar (8) ferry tax (9) grazing tax (10) professional tax from artificers, butchers, sugarcane crushers, cotton dressers, thatchers, cloth printers, fishers, sawers, tanners, artisans (11) and a tax on gambling<sup>4</sup>.

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1. *Tārīkh-i-Sher Shāhi*, p. 129-30.

2. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 458.

3. *Tārīkh-i- Sher Shāhi*, p. 17-147.

4. *Akabarnāmā* III, 693, 749.

Reviewing the result of Sher Shah's administrative system, Erskine opines that Sher Shah showed "more of the spirit of a legislator and of a guardian of his people than any prince before Akbar<sup>1</sup>." But Prof. Sharma<sup>2</sup> rightly thinks that the people had to pay too much for his role as a guardian. When we go through the sources of income other than land revenue, we find that the incidence of taxation fell heavily on the consumers.

### PLACE IN HISTORY

Some scholars hold that the claim to greatness of Sher Shah rests on his administrative system. But not a single aspect of his administration, excepting revenue, was new. The old bottles were lying scattered. He collected them and poured fresh wine into them. Maintenance of a corp of efficient spies and introduction of branding of horses were but a renewal of the practice of Alauddin Khilji. The achievements of Sher Shah in the sphere of improvement of communications are too well known to be recounted. Babar in his autobiography<sup>3</sup> shows that he projected the construction of a road from Agra to Kabul, with mile post at every mile, towers at every interval of nine miles and post houses at every eighteenth mile. But it remained a mere project, whereas Sher Shah's plans of constructing roads throughout the length and breadth of his empire was carried out in a masterly way.

It is said that Sher Shah introduced the modern *tankah*. In 1933 Mr. G. L. Schanzlin<sup>4</sup> in an article entitled "The Monetary System of the Mughals" remarked that silver money was first coined in the time of Sher Shah, who also introduced "a copper coinage based on the *Dam*, a piece weighing about 330 grains, this being the first systematic use of that metal for coinage in India." The above mentioned writer also notes that "the *Āīn-i-Akbari* contains a very elaborate account of Akbar's coins which were closely modelled after Sher Shah." But the writer referred to above has modified his

1. Erskine, 'History of India', Vol. II, p. 443.

2. IHQ, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 581-605.

3. Babur *Nāmā*, 413.

4. IHQ, Vol. IX, No. 1, 1933.



views in 1940. In the later article he opines<sup>1</sup> that "a silver coin of about 170 to 180 grains had existed in India under various names, long before Sher Shah had begun to coin silver rupees. The Turkish Delhi emperor Altamish (1210—35) introduced a silver coin of 165 grains.....It was a *tankah* and *tankahs* remained the principal type of silver in the kingdom of Delhi and North India upto the time of the Mughals."

Scholars have attempted to show the indebtedness of Akbar to Sher Shah. Akbar copied Sher Shah in regulating the weight of the *Dam*, assessing revenue and branding of horses. The *Dam* of Sher Shah weighed about 330 grains and that of Akbar 306·22 grains.

Akbar attempted to brand his horses. But he failed. Abul Fazl contemptuously observes, "Sher Shah sought the applause of posterity by reviving the regulation of Alauddin, of which he had read." The remark is typical of Akbar's panegyrist, "whose bitterness may perhaps be explained by his master's failure."

Abdul Fazl<sup>2</sup> says that "Sher Shah's assessment was so just as to form an ideal towards which Akbar's officers were striving." But the revenue measures in the latter part of Akbar's reign show that Akbar improved a lot even in the method of assessment. In 1566 varying local prices were substituted for the so-called uniform scale of Sher Shah's. In 1570—71 Sher Shah's method was perfected, because, the average produce was then estimated separately for each pargana, instead of the empire as a whole. Further, Akbar prevented corruption in collection of land revenue by forbidding Muqaddams to have a share of the produce, as was the practice in the time of Sher Shah. In place of farming of revenue, he (Akbar) resorted to cash payments. Moreover, Akbar introduced a separate *Jarib* of bamboos joined by iron rings in place of ropes. So Akbar almost perfected the revenue system of the land he ruled. We cannot but agree with Sharma<sup>3</sup>, when he observes that "Akbar's

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1. IHQ, Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 176. "The silver and copper coinage of Pre-Mughal India."

2. *Ain-i-Akbari* I, 297.

3. IHQ, Vol. XI, No. 4, p. 605.

schedule of per bigha rates of land revenue demand for different crops in cash formed as great a step in advance of Sher Shah's system, as Sher Shah's measurement was on the previous system of division."

Akbar went a great step in advance of Sher Shah when he granted some measure of autonomy to the provinces by dividing the empire into 15 *subahs* instead of the then existing divisions of Sarkars and Parganahs for fiscal and military purposes. Moreover, there was no counterpart of Akbar's *mansabdari* system in the regime of Sher Shah.

Prof. Sharma<sup>1</sup> holds that religious intolerance prevailed in the time of Sher Shah. He cites the example of the conversion of a Hindu temple into a mosque<sup>2</sup> in Jodhpur. But to conclude from this solitary instance that Sher Shah was intolerant shows that Prof. Sharma has failed to grasp the historical background of the age. The sixteenth century both in Europe and in India was an age of acute religious conflicts. Sher Shah fought vigorously against the prevailing tendency to fanaticism and obscurantism. He levied indeed the Jizya and the pilgrimage tax. But it should be remembered that these two taxes were a legacy to the Delhi Sultans from the Arab rulers of Sind. Sher Shah evinced true statesmanship by making separate arrangements for the Mussalman as well as the Hindu travellers in the serais. It was he who showed the way to Akbar as to how to recruit the best talents of the country for national service irrespective of caste and creed. This is evinced by the employment of Brahmajit Gaur as a commander of his army. Further it should be noted that Abbas and Abdulla inform us that Sher Shah did not put much faith on the theologians<sup>3</sup>. In the spacious mind of Sher Shah, the spheres of the Church and the State were truly separated. Though he sometimes brought religion into politics, yet he did not exalt the Church above the State. He would have kissed the toe of Hildebrand but he would not have gone to Canossa.

1. IHQ, Vol. XII, No. 4; "Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors" p. 10.12

2. Tārīkh-i-D̄'udī, Ms. 236.

3. Mustaqi in Elliot, Vol. V, p. 549.

Sher Shah was a man of large visions. He realised the necessity of establishing a strongly centralised State, promoting the economic interests of the people and pursuing the ideal of Rule of Law through it. Whereas Asoka, Chandra Gupta II, Harshavardhan, Alauddin Khilji and Akbar ruled for more than a quarter of a century each, Sher Shah had only five years to put his ideals into practice and to train up his successors in the art of administration of a modern state. This latter work he could not execute, because, the time allowed to him by the Almighty was too short. His empire might be compared to the *Haradhanu* which could be wielded by one and one person alone. His successors had neither the military prowess nor the statesmanlike wisdom to keep it together. The infant empire of the Surs was conquered indeed by Akbar. But the founder of the Sur dynasty seems to have avenged it by conquering the mind of the conqueror.

### REMAINS

The mausoleum of Sher Shah is the most impressive specimen of Pathan architecture. It is situated in the middle of a lake. It rests on a platform 243 feet square. The main structure of stone is 216 feet long, 212 feet wide and 22 feet high. The structure of the tomb is octagonal. Much skill is noticeable on the design and disposition of its architectural details. Hindu influence over the design of the tomb has been noted by a Muslim writer<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Kuraishi says that, "Both the lofty basement and the surrounding lake are found in certain Hindu temples; and when, as here, they are combined with corbelling and flat architraves in the inner doorways, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the design was largely influenced by Hindu traditions." Regarding the conception of the mausoleum Percy Brown observes that, "standing in the midst of a spacious artificial lake, it forms an ideal funerary monument to such a remarkable soldier adventurer as Sher Shāh, a magnificent grey pile emblematic of masculine strength, and at the same time the embodiment of eternal repose."

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1. Maulavi Muhammad Hamid Kuraishi in "List of Ancient Monuments protected under Act VII of 1904 in the provinces of Bihar and Orissa" p. 189.

# EMPEROR ISLAM SHAH

(1545—1554)

(Md. Nasirul Haque—Second Year Arts Class)

Islam Shah, son of Sher Shah, does not deserve, by virtue of his character and attainments to be called a great man. But he was born in Shahabad and was the only person from this District to rise to imperial dignity. As such, a brief sketch of his inglorious reign of about nine years has got to be included in this volume.

Islam Shah, popularly known as Salim Sure, was the second son of Sher Shah. His original name was Jalal Khan. On the death of Sher Shah, the nobles at Kalanjar invited him from Patna and raised him to the throne in preference to his elder brother Adil Khan. He was coronated on the 26 th May, 1545, four days after the death of his father. The throne for him was not a bed of roses. It was strewn with thorns on all sides. Sher Shah reigned only for five years and this period was too short for consolidating the vast empire he had conquered. His masterful personality, had imposed a temporary check on the centrifugal tendency of the independence loving Afghan nobles; but he had not time enough to enthuse them with the ideal of service for a common cause. The Afghans raised their heads against his successors in Malwa, the Punjab and even in Bengal. Humayun who had fled away from India in 1539 again sought to regain his empire and tried to rally round him the supporters of the Mughal dynasty. The valiant Rajputs had no reason to make common cause with the Afghans. They remained dissatisfied and endeavoured to regain the lost independence in many parts of the country.

Such a situation could be properly handed only by a person of iron will and determination, tact and perseverance, military vigour and statesman-like vision. Unfortunately, Islam Shah did not possess any of these qualities. He was cruel, vindictive, intolerant and tactless. Some of the prominent Afghan nobles did not recognise him as the sovereign. One of these was Khavass Khan the trusted general of Sher Shah. He and the new emperor had fought side by side in many a battle and Khavass Khan had always eclipsed

him by his glory and personality. The general espoused the cause of Adil Khan, the elder brother of Islam Shah. He rose up in an open revolt and marched towards Agra. But Islam Shah forestalled him and drove him back to Mewar, wherefrom he retired to Sirhind and thence to the Qumaon hills. Islam Shah failed to defeat him in open war. Then he took recourse to strategem and promising absolute safety he invited Khavass Khan to his court. The general foolishly put his trust on the sovereign who caused him to be murdered at night in his tent. This tragedy infuriated many of the Afghan nobles who conspired to encompass the death of Islam Shah. The Sultan became highly suspicious of every body in power. He took away the rank and office of many of the nobles and promoted his personal followers to the vacant posts and dignity. This served to exasperate the nobles still further. His cruelty drove the powerful Niyagir tribe of the Punjab to rebellion. Islam Shah had to spend a long time to subdue them. Islam Shah injured his own cause by his suspicious nature. Shujat Khan of Malwa was one of the faithful followers, but he suspected him of treachery and tried to get him assassinated. Even the members of his own family did not feel secure at his hand and he too entertained a lively suspicion against many of them. This made his life miserable. He fell ill and did not trust any physician or nurse. He administered relief himself and fell a prey to the disease on the 22 nd Nov., 1524

Islam Shah completed the magnificent tomb of his father. He wrote an inscription which reads as follows:—"During the reign of the helper of Islam and Muslims, the uprooter of heresy and reviver of Faith, who is helped from the Heavens on high, the conqueror of enemies (namely) Islam (=Salimar Islam) Shah, the king. May God perpetuate his kingdom and supermacy, and may He increase his state and dignity! In the year 952 on the 7 th. day of the month of Jumaday II."

The inscription shows that he was determined to root out heresy. Sher Shah had been tolerant towards the new religious movement started by Sayyed Mohammed of Jaunpore, and his disciple Shaikh Abdulla Niyazi of Bayane and actively propogated by Shaikh Alai, son of Shaikh Hasan of Bengal. The new movement preached a sort of primitive communisim. The leaders of the sect did not care to

have any personal property. They wanted to bring about an equality in economic condition among the different classes in society. They championed the cause of the poor and down-trodden against the rapacity and violence of the rich and the powerful. Powerful nobles like Khavass Khan and Behar Khan came under the influence of Shaikh Abai. Even the highly cultured Shaikh Mobarak, the illustrious father of the distinguished sons, Abul Fazal and Faizi embraced the new faith for a time. Such an influential teacher, however, was bitterly persecuted by Islam Shah and flogged to death in 1548.

Islam Shah tried to improve without success the arrangement made by his father for the convenience of travellers. He built a Caravan Serai which his father had set up. His father had arranged to distribute alms to the poor travellers at the imperial camp, but Islam Shah ordered that the alms should be distributed at each Caravan Serai. This provided excellent opportunity to petty officials to embezzle public funds.

Like his father Islam Shah also erected the tomb for his eternal sleep at Sasaram. The tomb has fallen in utter decay but the causeway across the water by which access to it is obtained, is still intact. It has been described in the Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1922-23 as follows : -

The causeway is characterised by a succession of lintel-headed spans bridged by a corbelled construction the piers between them being emphasised by a series of projecting balconies on heavy brackets, surmounted originally by small chattries of the square open columned type characteristic of the architecture of Sher Shah; though these chattries have now all disappeared.

## PAHLWAN SINGH.

(Prof. Nawal Kishore M. A. T. D. (Lond.))

Mid-eighteenth century India witnessed the mighty Moghul Empire in a state of disintegration. The central authority lost all vitality and the provincial governors practically usurped all effective powers. They appointed their own Naibs and Agents and nominated their successors. At times, and here and there, we find settled government and a genuine attempt at a strong and able administration but on the whole peace and order were conspicuous by their absence throughout Hindustan. Anarchy and disorder, chaos and confusion, that set in after the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739, reigned supreme after the "removal of the recognised heads of the old order." This was due to the revivalist spirit amongst the Hindus and Musalmans, the rise of ambitious and enterprising adventurers, both native and foreign, and the diplomacy of the West. The field of fortune was open to any one who could wield a sword and a gun or use his intellectual gifts and talent for intrigues.

The Eastern provinces were no better than the rest of India. Their history during the period is a "complex subject in which personality and nationality, diversities, and contrarities, are combined and confused." Bengal was specially the scene of repeated revolutions, dark conspiracies, tragic murders and rapid changes of governments due to the tricky ways of the upstart rulers, the gold of the bankers, the veiled hostility of the natives and political pretensions of the astute foreign traders. Bihar, then a subject and Frontier province, could hardly remain unaffected by the political situation abroad. Ambition and intrigue, violence and lawlessness had their full play and political talents often combined with literary predilections to produce heroic figures. The over defiant Bhojpurias, the adventurous Bhumihars, the talented Kayasthas, the martial Afghans, the ambitious Iranis and even the fugitive Prince-Imperial were the chief actors of the political drama that was played in Bihar from the forties to the sixties of the eighteenth century. Shahabad, then, was full of refractory Zamindars wellknown for their spirit of independence and defiance of settled authority. Though often subdued they were

never completely crushed. In fact the hold of Musalmans on the western extremities of Bihar had always been precarious because of the turbulent and independent spirit of the people and the ineffective use of the Muslim cavalry, especially in the broken and rocky country of Bhojpur and Sasaram.

By far the most interesting and fascinating personality of the period in the history of Shahabad was Raja Pahlwan Singh. He was at first an ordinary Zamindar and a silent spectator but soon afterwards he became a principal actor in the political drama which was then being enacted in this district. Details of Pahlwan Singh's antecedents are shrouded in obscurity but he was too well known a political figure to escape the notice of contemporary writers. Seid Gholam-Hosseini Khan, the authority of the *Seir-ul-Mutaqherin*, describes him and his brother Babu Suther Singh as "Zamindars of consequence, in the districts of Sahar-seram and Chain-poor." The *Dustur-ul-Insha* further tells us that he was a member of the Ujjainia tribe of Rajputs and a resident and proprietor of Nokha in the Parganah of Sasaram of the Shahabad District.

Pahlwan Singh rose to power by dint of his great services to and under the patronage of Aliwardi Khan, the famous Viceroy of Bengal. He ever remained faithful to his benefactor and his family. In 1745 he joined and fought side by side with Nawab Zainuddin, Haibat Jung, Aliwardi Khan's son-in-law and Nizam of Bihar, against Mustafa Khan, the Afghan General, on the occasion of the latter's assault on Patna (Azimabad) with the intention of seizing its Government. Again, in 1748 he helped Aliwardi Khan himself against an Afghan-Marhatta coalition. With the appointment of Raja Ramnarain to the Deputy Governorship of Bihar in 1751, Pahlwan Singh extended a helping hand in settling the affairs of the province, especially, the frontier districts, and keeping order by persuading Udwant Singh, the Zamindar of Bhojpur and the ancestor of Kuar Singh of the 1857 Mutiny fame, Raja Chatterdhari Singh and several others to settle down the payment of dues for Shahabad, both arrear and current.

Pahlwan Singh's attachment to the house of Aliwardi Khan was too deep seated and sincere to be estranged by the despotic caprices of his beloved grandson and successor Sirajuddowla. He was fore-



most in coming forward and proceeding as a leader of Raja Ram Narain's forces when about the year 1756 they were called upon to aid the Nawab in his expedition against his first cousin, Shaukat Jung, the governor of Purneah, who had been instigated by the British to resist and not to recognise the former's accession to the Viceroyalty of Bengal. Pahlwan Singh was present in the short and decisive battle of Maniari and Nabab Jung wherein the rash valour of the revolted cousin cost his life and the whole of Purneah submitted without resistance. Soon after, on the 2nd of July, 1757, followed the tragic murder of Sirajuddowla and the overthrow of his dynasty. The brave Rajput Zamindar of Nokha did insist on proving true to the salt of Aliwardi's house by joining Raja Sunder Singh of Tikari in entreating Raja Ram Narain, the Deputy Governor of Bihar, to take up arms in revenge for the murder of their benefactor's grandson. But the Raja backed out, probably, because he was too busy suppressing the rebellious activities of Kamgar Khan, the Zamindar of Mai or Narhat who had possibly been encouraged to rebel by the interested parties in Bengal and thus to keep the faithful Bihar Deputy Governor and his Lieutenants engaged in Bihar. Disappointed in his entreaties and vehemently enraged at the treacherous usurpation of his master's position, Pahlwan Singh developed extreme antagonism to the new Nawab and continued to harbour it for long.

The deplorable death of Surajuddaula, by transferring the sovereignty of Bengal to another family, did not put an end to the troubles of the country. Mirzafar Khan now became his successor and was everywhere acknowledged with unanimity. But this did not lessen the hatred that Raja Ram Narain, Pahlwan Singh and others bore towards him. On the contrary they were anxiously panting for a happy moment when they might be able to take full revenge from the usurping Nawab for the injuries done to Ali Wardi Khan's family. Such a suitable opportunity followed soon after when the fugitive Prince-Imperial Aligoher (later Emperor Shahalam II) in conjunction with Muhammad Quli Khan, the Governor of Ilahabad, undertook an expedition against Bengal. Raja Ram Narain, however, could not avail himself of this splendid opportunity as he was under certain engagements to the English which prevented him

from going over to the Imperial side. But Pahlwan Singh was under no such engagements. No wonder, therefore, that he joined Mohammad Quli Khan and offered his services for the Shahzada only if the former gave up his resolve to go back to Ilahabad.

Raja Ram Narain was a timid, wavering but artful person. Being a splendid opportunist he did not want to stand decidedly committed to any party. He therefore took to double dealing. On the one hand, he wrote to the Nawab and to Colonel Clive for immediate help and on the other he assured the Shahzada and his General of his goodwill and attachment. He even concluded an agreement with the Shahzada. Thus he managed to keep the Imperial army inactive till he got news of help starting from Bengal. Then he adopted a defiant attitude towards the invading Prince-Imperial and his General who besieged Azimabad. Only a short time after the siege had started, Mohammed Quli Khan decided to effect a singular retreat firstly because he got news that the Bengal army with the English at their elbow, was near at hand and secondly because the fortress of Ilahabad was lost to him and taken possession of by Shujauddawla the Governor of Oudh, who had previously promised to join in the Bengal expedition but now availed himself of Mohammad Quli Khan's absence to increase his own possessions. In vain did Pahlwan Singh strongly object to the rising of the siege and on the necessity of tarrying some days more until some other course might be taken. The retreat did come.

It was in the course of the Imperial army's retreat that Pahlwan Singh got an opportunity to prove himself not only a valiant fighter but a faithful friend too. Saed Ghulam Hussain Khan, the contemporary Patna historian, had been following the besieging camp. But he now felt disgusted at the topsy turvy conditions there and wanted to leave for Pahlwan Singh's territory. The Raja was only too glad to afford him great hospitality and gave him an escort with whose help he reached Sasaram where he stayed for some time. Soon after the historian's father, Hedaet Ali Khan, also reached there in the company of the retreating Shahzada and Mohammad Quli Khan. This nobleman had previously resided at Azimabad and was in possession of a landed estate there. But he had been exiled and dispossessed of his estate under Sirajuddowla's order. Since then he

had attached himself to the Imperial Court and had risen to an important position there. But he too now got sick of the ignorance and supineness of the Prince and did not know what to do. His son, the Patna historian, advised him to approach Pahlwan Singh for help saying that "to all appearance he (Pahlwan Singh) would find means to make an agreement with Government" and that "out of a point of honour he would so far comprehend him in the treaty as to do nothing for himself, unless he had done something for his guest." Hedaet Ali Khan had no alternative but to follow his son's advice and he went to pitch his tents close to those of Pahlwan Singh on the little river Durgawati. The Raja received him with great hospitality, behaved in a most respectful and obliging manner and promised to help him.

Having got a close friend in Hedaet Ali Khan, Pahlwan Singh imparted to him his own scheme of action after Mohammad Quli Khan's retreat. It was, "first to prevail upon the Shahazada to return towards the East" for the purpose of fighting the Nawab's forces and the English", and secondly to take Moosher Lass ( a French General ) in his own pay, in which case he (Pahlwan Singh) would furnish all the money necessary for assembling a powerful army, and would find means to afford the expenses of the expedition, his sole aim being to acquire a name that might reach the latest posterity." He added that he was bent on this design", had taken his chance, had submitted beforehand to destiny, and would encounter whatever might happen," provided he could avenge his master's death. Pahlwan Singh sent Sayed Ghulam Hussain several times with messages to the above purport, both to the Prince and Moosher Lass, but as he was a Zamindar, neither would repose any confidence in his promises.

Having lodged his father with Pahlwan Singh and made his mind easy, Gholam Hussain proceeded with his family to Benares where he generally resided but was checked on the way by the men of Raja Balwant Singh of Ramnagar. He had again to fall back upon his Shahabad patron who helped him with a letter to Raja Balwant Singh and with some soldiers with whose help, at long last, he reached his destination.

In the meantime the Nawab's forces with Colonel Clive arrived Azimabad and soon proceeded against Pahlwan Singh. But this wary man, unwilling to cope with such an adversary in the field, kept himself at the foot of the hills in Sasaram, and for a few days preparations were made for a war and battle. Matters however soon turned to a negotiation and Raja Ram Narain pledged himself that he would find means to bring the Raja to reasonable terms. The whole affair was soon brought to a conclusion but Pahlwan Singh had the generosity first of all, instead of beginning by his own concerns" to bring Hedaet Ali Khan's affair to the carpet and to finish it to that nobleman's satisfaction. "He had the attention to stipulate that Hedaet Ali Khan should have liberty to return to his estate that his Jagir lands should be restored to him and that no injury should be inflicted on him on account of the past. As soon as Hedaet Ali Khan obtained possession of his estate he returned there to lead a life of ease and dignity. Raja Pahlwan Singh returned to his Zamindari, where he applied himself to every art that could restore husbandry and industry in his country.

Very soon after the above settlement the Shahzada, Aligoher undertook his second expedition in Bengal. This time the hero of our story joined Raja Ram Narain in a march against the Imperial forces and took an active part in the operations. He remained faithful to his Deputy Governor in weal and woe throughout till Mir Kasim became Viceroy of Bengal and obliged Ram Narain to submit to his control and imprisoned him. The new Nawab then proceeded to bring regularity into the state and subordination and punctuality amongst the Zemindars. Many submitted but Pahlwan Singh and the other Zemindars of Shahabad refused to do so. Mir Kasim Khan, therefore marched upon Sassaram and the district of Shahabad. He was at the head of a very large force and Pahlwan Singh with the other Zemindars dared not stand ground against him. They, therefore, crossed the Ganges and fled to Ghazipur, where they built themselves habitations, in the domain of Shujauddowla and in the territory of Raja Balwant Singh, Zemindar of Benares. Their lands in Shahabad were taken possession of by the Nawab and put under his own collector of revenue supported by strong bodies of troops.

It is thus clear that in a period of kaleidoscopic changes in the history of Bengal, between 1756 and 1765, we find prominent personalities trying to make a fortune, even if it involved treachery and double dealing which led to the enslavement of the motherland. Mirzafar and Raja Ram Narain are glaring examples of that type of men who flourished in those years. Yet Raja Pahlwan Singh was among those few patriots, straight and honest, who tried to save their country, their ruling sovereign and the people too. He remained faithful to the Viceregal house that had helped him in 1745 and fought for Sirajuddaula, the favourite grandson of Aliwardi. He could not see traitors like Mirzafar raised to the Nawabship of Bengal. He had the courage to go against Raja Ram Narain, the Deputy Governor of Bihar, who was an employee of the Nawab of Bengal and yet played a double game in making an effective alliance with the English East India Company. Had Raja Ram Narain sided with Pahlwan Singh in the siege of Azimabad by Shahzada Aligoahar the Prince would have been successful and the English with the East India Company would have had gone back to the seas via the Bay of Bengal. But destiny did not favour such a conjunction. Fate willed otherwise.

# SADAL MISRA

By

Shamsher Jung Bahadur, M.A.,  
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Shahabad has got the distinction of producing not only great men of action but also equally great persons of contemplation. Sadal Misra belongs to the latter group. He is acclaimed, by all historians of Hindi literature, as one of the four progenitors of modern Hindi prose literature.

Tradition, preserved amongst the descendents of Sadal Misra, says that one of his fore-fathers, Shukdeva Misra, a Shakdwipi Brahmin, was the first to settle down in this district, in a village named Dhrupdiha. Shukdeva was stern and austere Brahmin, devoted to learning and religious practices. He did not care to mix with the common herd, nor to take part in communal feasts on the occasion of Shradh or marriage. People came to regard him as proud and unsocial; but in reality he was so much engrossed in the pursuit of knowledge that he could hardly find time to respond to social calls. But his fellow caste-men were not contented till they were able to drive away the unsocial Shukdeva from the village. Shukdeva thence migrated to Bhadwar, a village some five miles to the east of Arrah. The Zamindars of the village, though at first suspicious of him, gradually came to appreciate the sterling worth of the Brahmin. He was reluctant to accept a large number of villages, which were offered to him as a gift by the Zamindar, but was prevailed upon to take up just sufficient property to maintain his livelihood on a modest scale. Subsequently Shukadeva's descendents migrated to Arrah, where they settled down in a Mohalla which is known as Misratola after their name. It was here that Sadal Misra was born about the year 1768 A.D. Dr. Shyamsunder Das, who has the credit of rescuing Sadal Misra's work from oblivion, states in his introduction to '*Nasiketopakhyān*' that the name of the grandfather of Sadal Misra was Lakshman Misra and of his father was Nandmani Misra. We have made personal enquiries from Pt. Raja Misra, great grandson of the author and have got documentary evidence to prove that Lakshman Misra and not

Nandmani Misra was the father of Sadal Misra. The same gentleman has related to us how Sadal Misra acquired great mastery over Sanskrit language and literature and earned considerable reputation as a teacher. He had, however, to fight against poverty. He went to Patna in search of fortune and soon came in contact with a rich Zamindar who employed him in reciting and explaining the Puranas. His exposition of the Shastras was so lucid and interesting that a large number of people used to gather together everyday to have the pleasure of hearing him. Some of the Europeans too were attracted to the discourse of the Pandit. One of them was so much impressed by his learning and saintly character that he volunteered to help him to secure a lucrative and honourable post under the East India Company if he cared to accompany him to Calcutta. Sadal Misra readily agreed and went to the Metropolis of the dominions of the Company in India.

Sadal Misra was struck with wonder at the sight of big palatial buildings and the great concourse of people in Calcutta. He reproduces his first impression of the great city in the preface to his book *Nasiketopakhyān*, in which he writes “चित्र विचित्र सुन्दर बड़ी बड़ी अटारिन से इन्द्रपुरी समान शोभायमान, नगर कलिकत्ता महाप्रतापी वीर नृपति कंपनी महाराज के सदा फूला फला रहे जहां उत्तम लोग बसते हैं और देश देश से एक से एक गुणी जन आय आय अपने अपने गुण को सुफल करि बहुत आनंद में मगन होते हैं।” Through the intervention of his English friend he got an access to John Gilchrist, the head of the Hindustani Dept. of the Fort William College. Mr. Gilchrist had built up a reputation for scholarship in vernacular language and literature and Sadal Misra pays a high tribute to him in the following words—“नाम सुन सदल मिश्र भी वहां आन पहुंचा वो बड़ी बड़ाई सुनि सर्व विद्या-निधान ज्ञानवान महाप्रधान श्रीमहाराज जान गिलक्रिस्त साहब से मिला कि जो पाठशाले के आचार्य हैं। तिनकी आज्ञा पाय दो एक ग्रंथ संस्कृत से भाषा वो भाषा से संस्कृत किए।” John Gilchrist recognised the merit and learning of Sadal Misra and had him appointed a lecturer in his own Department in the College. The Fort William College was meant for training up the young Civilians in the manners, customs and language of the country. As there was a dearth of books in prose, both in Bengali and in Hindi, the authorities of the College directed the Professors to produce such books as would enable the

young recruits to the Civil Service, which was exclusively manned at that time by Englishmen, to get an insight into the life of the people of India. Sadal Misra himself states that he translated several Sanskrit works into Hindi and rendered some Hindi books into Sanskrit. Unfortunately, however, none of these books are at present, available.

The only work, on which the fame of Sadal Misra rests is *Nasiketopakhyān*, which was lying buried in a manuscript form in the Library of Bengal Asiatic Society till 1901 when B. Shyamsundar Das made it accessible to the public by publishing it through the Kashi Nagri Pracharini Sabha. Sadal Misra seems to have entered the service of the Company in 1801 at the age of 32 or 33. He wrote *Nasiketopakhyān* in 1803, at the age of 35 when he was at the height of his mental and intellectual vigour. He served the institution for more than a quarter of a century with great credit and amassed a considerable fortune. His descendants take delight in recounting how he came from Calcutta by steamer to Semaria Ghat with one and a half lacs of rupees and was escorted to his home at Arrah by European soldiers. This fortune could not have been accumulated simply from his salary. In those days rich men used to give handsome presents to the learned Brahmins on all occasions of festivity as well as in Shraddh. The reputation Sadal Misra built up in Calcutta must have secured for him many invitations from the nobility of the country from whom he must have derived the major portion of his fortune. Whatever might be the case, it is a fact that Sadal Misra purchased the intermediate Zamindari right over the villages of Singahi and Hazānpura at the cost of 11000 rupees. He also built a decent house at Arrah where his descendants (Pt. Raja Misra and Pt. Shyamalanand Misra his great grandsons) are still living. He took a lively interest in cultivation and encouraged the production of new money crops on his land. He continued to devote himself to teaching work even at Arrah. Tradition says that he was a man of charitable disposition and helped many poor students with food and lodging. It is said that his services were requisitioned even after his retirement and that his great contemporary, B. Kuar Singh, dissuaded him from leaving his native district again. He died in 1847. Sadal Misra's *Nasiketopakhyān* is remarkable for two



reasons, first that it is one of the few early prose works in Khari Boli which has now become the standard in Hindi, secondly the work may claim to be a pioneer of modern novels. Dr. Shyam Sunder Das has called it a translation work (अनुवाद) without indicating the original work from which it is alleged to have been translated. We, however, do not know of any Sanskrit work which gives the story in the form in which Sadal Misra has written it. He used the traditional *pauranic* form in narrating the story through a conversation between Janmgaya and Vaishampayan and introduced Pauranic figures like Raghu and Uddalak into the story. This might have misled Dr. Das in thinking the work to be a mere translation. The author too has not clearly stated whether it is an original work or a translation. He simply writes—“अब संवत् १८६० में नासिकेतोपाख्यान को कि जिसमें चंद्रावती की कथा कही है, देववाणी से कोई कोई समझ नहीं सकता, इसलिये खड़ी बोली में किया।” The ambiguity of the statement seems to have been intentional as original works were looked on with disfavour, both by the authorities of the college as well as the general public.

The author has built up a beautiful romance round the life of Princess Chandravati, described here as the only daughter of Raja Raghu of the famous Ikshwaku family. Chandravati one day went with her companions to bathe in the river Ganges and saw a beautiful lotus, petals of which were tied down with Kusha grass, floating down the stream. She caught hold of it and inhaled its perfume. She was impregnated through this simple action because the Sage Uddalak having lost control over himself, had lost his vital fluid which he had put into the lotus. Within a short time the people began to whisper about the shameless conduct of the princess and her mother rebuked her severely when she noticed the condition of her daughter. We noticed in Sadal Misra's description of the situation a touch of the influence of the Bengali poet Bharat Chandra's *Vidaya-Sundar*. The princess was banished to a Jungle, where a sage took pity upon her and took her to his hermitage. The robust optimism of Sadal Misra is manifest in his description of Chandravati in her new environment, where she thanked her lot because the calamity had brought her to such calm and peaceful surroundings. She delivered, through the nose, a son in due course; and the boy was called Nasiketā because he came out of Nāsikā

(nose). The subsequent career of Nasiketa has got a faint resemblance to the narrative of the Kathopanishad, the hero of which is Nachiketā. Like Nachiketā, Nasiketa of Sadal Misra goes to the abode of Yama, God of Death, but whereas the hero of the Upanishad secures Brahmvidya from Yama, the hero of our author simply seeks the permissions of Yama to visit the different quarters of the other world. Nasiketa was accorded permission and having triumphantly returned to this world, he related in great details the different quarters of the dominion of Yama and described also the rewards and punishments accorded to the dead in accordance with their merits or sins. In this part of the book Sadal Misra presents a beautiful account of the ethical Code which prevailed in Hindu Society at the beginning of the 19th century. One of the meritorious actions mentioned by him is the marrying one's daughter to a Kulin (page 43). Such a work cannot, by any means, be called a translation. The vividness of description, the portraying of mental conflicts of Chandravati, the quaint fascination of Uddalak for her, the pathos of her situation and the description of the forceful personality of Nasiketa make the book a pioneer of the modern novels in Hindi literature. Living in a period of transition Sadal Misra had to take recourse to the device of Pauranic narration, though in the book itself he described a romance of love and adventure.

The prose used in the book is not stuffed with words and phrases of Braj Bhāshā which was very usual for a writer of those days. The writers of that age, if they at all deviated from the royal path of Braj Bhāshā, could not help using the poetic diction in their prose even, as—“इतना कह महदेव जी गिरिजा को साथ ले गंगा तीर पर जाय, नीर में न्हाय, न्दिलाय etc.” But Sadal Misra tried to be more simple, direct and at the same time natural. Though trying to write in chaste Hindi, he did not discard wholesale the phraseology which was in vogue in those days. The result was that he has succeeded a lot in using idioms and sentences which catch our attention at once as ईश्वर करे योंही सदा फूले रहो; तिनको मारे लाठिन से चूर कर नीचे गिराते हैं etc. At places we find him being influenced by the Bengali style of Hindustani as—तुम से पिता की बात जो सदा सत्य होती आई है, सो मैं झुठाने नहीं सकता हूँ। Perhaps this was due to his residing at Calcutta. He also made a copious use of colloquial words and phrases spoken in the villages of the

Shahabad district as—जाव, सगरेपुर का दशेन इन्हें करा लावो; अब माता पोता हमारे शोक से कलपते होंगे; माता पोता मारे मोह से दुबरा कर मरने योग्य हो रहे थे; मुगरों के मार से भुरकुस होते; और जो मनोहर घर बना सोना विधि से ब्राम्हण को देते हैं; थोड़ी दूर आगे उसके कितने एक कोस तक बाढ़ है धीपता; etc. etc. The Pandit style in vogue at that time also found expression in his prose as—धर्मात्मा लोगों को अमरावती में पहुँचावते हैं; सकल कर्म के जाननिहारे; जहां पुण्य पाप के फल पावते हैं, etc. Pt. Misra has tried to make his prose attractive by putting in some two or three forms of Hindi poetry as Dohā, Choupai and Kavitta. Moreover, to increase its effect, he has, at places, made use of figures of speech. Here is a beautiful example of the use of simile, “उस वनमें व्याघ्र और सिंह के मय से वह अकेली कमल के समान चंचल नेत्र वाली व्याकुल हो ऊँचे स्वर से रो रो कहने लगी कि अरे विधना ! तैने यह क्या किया ? और बिछुरी हुई हरनी के समान चारों ओर देखने लगी ।” His prose had attained a certain standard of maturity is evident from pieces like this “एक दिन विपत्त की मारी हुई सहेलियों के साथ मैं गंगा नहाने को गई । वहां एक कमल का फूल कुश से लपेटा हुआ धारा में बहा चला आता था । बहुत सुन्दर देख एक सखी ने उसे हमारे हाथ में ला दिया । गांठ खोल लगी जो मैं सूँघने सो वही उसके भीतर से कुछ दूध सा नाक के पथ से मेरे पेट में चला गया ।” Such pieces are decidedly modern.

His style suffered from certain minor defects too, such as the lack of uniformity throughout and some slackness as regards observing the rules of grammar but yet its expressiveness, and directness can not be challenged. In an age when no patronage was afforded to Hindi by the State, the efforts of Pt. Sadal Misra were highly laudable and worthy of imitation.

In our opinion he holds a place superior to Laloo Lal and equal to Inshaullah Khan and Sadasukh Lal, amongst the precursors of modern Hindi Prose literature.

# BABU KUAR SINGH

By

(Prof. Paramhans Rai, M.A., B. Com.)

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How is it that Babu Kuar Singh, a loyal Zemindar turned out to be a rebel at the fag end of his life? How is it that a person who had commenced his career as a lover of games and hunting preferring roaming about on horse's back in the jungles adjoining his village, sometimes, in company with British officials, unmindful of the political currents of the country led the insurgent Indian army in 1857 and proved true to his leadership? How is it that one who had spent the major portion of his life in entertaining British officials joined the chorus demanding Britishers to quit India? How is it that a youth who had no academic qualification and who never joined any military academy proved himself a master strategist, an expert in Guerilla warfare and a military leader of the first rank? These are some of the puzzling questions animating specially for the present generation and an attempt will be made to answer these questions in this short life-sketch of Babu Kuar Singh.

I am not a historian nor a biographer and I would not detain my readers to offer my apologies and plead historical ignorance for whatever opinion I express in this article. My greatest credential is that I belong to the dust of the district and every particle of the dust has a story to tell about Babu Kuar Singh, his family and his ancestors. Indian history as we read to-day is 'His master's voice' which fails to give us a true picture of the time and the part played by our national heroes. Indian history as we recite with our morning prayers, sing in our folk song and narrate in our village sittings is the true music which, most unfortunately, we have exchanged for ridiculous mimicry. Some gems of history are lying scattered in villages. They can enhance the beauty of the existing city museums and can be able to transform the entire personality of the nation. However, it has not been possible for me, by this time, to gather even some of them illustrating the life of Babu Kuar Singh. The present article, therefore, bears nothing original. It depends for its materials mainly on the writings of foreigners and a few indigeneous records.

Shahabad district especially its northern portion is otherwise known as Bhojpur. A Bhojpuri couplet says that if there is any place on the earth commanding world-wide reputation it is Jagdishpur. This is Bhojpuri way of honouring its national hero. According to the version of the British writers Babu Kuar Singh was a rebel Zemindar of Shahabad district whose antecedents they have not found worth mentioning but the general public hailed him as their liberator from foreign bondage and as one of the most brilliant leaders of a war of independence.

Babu Kuar Singh had the proud privilege of belonging to the royal family of the Pammar Kshatriyas of Malwa—Malwa of the Mahabharat age when romantic Awantika was its capital, Malwa of Shakrari Vikramaditya when historical Ujjaini was its capital, Malwa of Maharaja Bhoj time when Dharanagar was its capital, Malwa of the Muslim rule when it had no capital of its own but was a principality under a Governor representative of the Delhi Sultanate. It was during the muslim rule that his ancestors happened to establish themselves in Shahabad district with their headquarters at Jagdishpur. Each period has its own romance. Each period has its own attractions and detractions but in every period this clan of Pammar Kshatriya gave birth to dominating personalities, endowed with high qualities of bravery and statesmanship, an admirable admixture of physical and moral virtues.

One Sangram Shah of Maharaja Bhoj's line came to Gaya on a religious pilgrimage. He found the district of Shahabad fertile and attractive and decided to settle down here as there was no attraction in Malwa under the Muslim rule. He defeated the Cheras<sup>1</sup> of Shahabad and established his capital at Dawan near Jagdishpur. In the seventh line of Sangram Shah was one Raja Narain Mull who got the Bhojpur state from Shahjehan by way of reward for his services. Raja Narain Mull made Jagdishpur his capital and built his fortress there.

1. The Shahabad Gazetteer. "The ruling indigenous tribe at this period was the Chera, and apparently the chieftains of this race ruled over the country until they were driven southwards by the inroads of immigrant Rajputs."

The family maintained the tradition of Malwa in the new state of Bhojpur also. Personalities after personalities appeared at Jagdishpur surcharging the entire atmosphere with the electricity of bravery and truthfulness. I would resist the temptation of enumerating the exploits of Babu Udwant Singh (the founder of the village Udwant-nager), Babu Umaraon Singh and Babu Sahebjada Singh, the father of our hero Babu Kuar Singh. They are full of militant romance. Everywhere what may be called the Bhojpuri character is depicted - simple but dignified, tender but unbreakable knowing not how to bend even, respect for others but no negotiation with injustice, benevolent heart with steel breast, frowny look with a smiling nature, unbounded patriotism but not coloured with narrowness, sword tempered with forgiveness but no truck with any disloyalty to the country. Ghulam Hussain, the author of *Seir-ul-mutaqharim* has immortalised Shahebjada Singh a contemporary of Mirkasim in his monumental historical work.

Babu Kuar Singh was born at Jagdishpur in about 1782. The town enjoyed central situation on an elevated land. On one side of it was a beautiful landscape decorated with different kinds of rich agricultural crops at different seasons extending from the Ganges to the Sone above Daudnagar intersected with scattered patches of jungles. On the other was dense forest spreading from Behea area to the Sasaram hills. The town itself was surrounded by dense jungle. So long these jungles were there the Britishers failed to defeat him and it was only when the jungles were made approachable by clearance that the unbendable Jagdishpur became helpless.

This jungle was the training ground of Babu Kuar Singh. He had no aptitude for education. He had a tutor appointed by his guardian but like Sivaji he preferred his own tutorship encouraged by the nearness of dense jungles full of wild beasts. His constant companions were his horse, and his shield and sword. Every day he had a match to play with the wild beasts of his jungle. He built a permanent hunting excursion camp at Jitaura in the centre of the forest. The Commissioners of Patna, not to speak of other British officials used to come on hunting excursions as his guest at Jitaura camp. Once Sir Frederick Haleedey Lt. Governor of Bengal and Bihar also had been to his camp at Jitaura and was

simply charmed with his skill of hunting. Even on the day when some rebel Sepoys from Dinapur Cant. reached Jagdishpur with Harkisan Singh, he was at Jitaura on hunting excursion. On his return he found himself more pleased to hear the Sepoys requesting him to lead the rebel forces at Arrah.

After the death of his father in 1830 he had taken up the administration of his Zamindari in his own hands. It is strange to find during a period when rackrenting was the fashion of the day there was such a Zamindar in Bihar who adopted the principle of trusteeship in his relation to his ryots and in whose administration there was more remission than collection of revenues, who even at the cost of his personal financial embarrassments helped his ryots in times of distress, improved trade and agriculture in his Elaka and introduced the reign of benevolent justice in his Zamindari. He had his own way of rendering help to agriculture, certainly not by high sounding epithets but by silent practical incentives. India understands practices more easily than mere sermons. One day a farmer from near the present Jitaura village came to him and requested him to accept the land revenue in kind and not in money. The farmer was ready to pay anything in kind only if he was granted immunity from money payment. Babu Kuar Singh consulted his advisors and asked the farmer to supply the following commodities (I) 1000 bullock's load of dried mahua fruits and (II) 1000 bullocks' load of dried green mango fruits. His order was obeyed in time. He expressed his sense of appreciation in these words, "I am proud of claiming a farmer like you in my Zemindari". His goods were returned to him and his land revenue exempted. Instances like this can be multiplied. This is a novel way of helping agriculture and industries connected with it. India stands in need of some such assistance which is very easily, comprehensibly and profitably adoptable.

On account of his unregulated expenditure, inadequate revenue collection benevolent remissions, civil suits and magnificent social festivities, he involved himself into monetary troubles so much so that by 1850 when he was of about 70 years, he incurred a debt of about 20 lacks of rupees at the rate of interest always favourable to his creditors because he despised higgling. He could have easily arranged the payment of his debts but he could not reconcile his

sense of honour with the mortgaging of even a fraction of his Zemindari. His creditors went to the court and secured easy decree against him. He could have fought his mahajans in the court and could have delayed the date of judgement by years. But this also was derogatory to his sense of honesty. He grew anxious when the date for attaching his property came near. He saw the Collector of Arrah in this connection who gave him words of consolation and promised him his support. The Collector referred the matter to the Commissioner suggesting for Court of Wards and payment of creditors in order to save his Zemindari from going into liquidation. The Commissioner, forwarded the case to the Bengal Government in the Board of Revenue Department with his own recommendations. The Bengal Govt. promised to take over the management of his Zemindari and pay off the creditors. He ran to the Collector at Arrah to convey his gratefulness to him. He felt convinced that his property was saved.

The Board of Revenue Dept. after some time was prepared to take over the management of his Zemindari but refused to pay the debt. It was a thunderbolt for Babu Kuar Singh. He could not believe it. He saw the Collector and Commissioner again but his attempts proved futile. He was given some time which was insufficient. Within one month he was to pay his creditors otherwise the Board of Revenue threatened to sever its connections from the management of his Zemindari. Creditors were asked to lodge their claims with the Collector within one month after which they would forfeit their claims. Babu Kuar Singh got perturbed at this double edged attack. But he still had hopes. In the meanwhile Babu Kuar Singh got an opportunity of welcoming Sir Frederrick Halledey, the then Governor of Bengal and Behar at his Jitaura hunting camp when he opened his heart before him and the guest promised to do the needful for his Zemindari. This is the story of the year 1855. Babu Kuar Singh still believed in the promises of the Govt. and officials and remained loyal to the Govt.

I would not dilate upon explaining the causes of the Sepoy Mutiny nor do I take up the question why Babu Kuar Singh joined the said mutiny. But this much I can say that though he was firm in his loyalty till the beginning of 1857 yet he had reasons to suspect



the intentions of British officials from the day when the then Collector of Arrah while arresting Munshi Kashi Prasad at his Arrah residence said, "I will arrest Babu Kuar Singh, bring him to Arrah and hang him." This confirmed his suspicion about the evil intention of Mr. Taylor, the then Commissioner of Patna who wanted him to come over to Patna which Babu Kuar Singh was postponing and postponing on this and that excuse. It will not be out of place here to quote Mr. G. W. Forest who writes in his book "History of the Indian Mutiny" :—

"The policy of Taylor was to overawe the fanatics and suspected classes by repressive measures which, however, engendered as much hatred as fear." I do not like to refer to the atrocities perpetrated by Mr. Taylor. Babu Kuar Singh was taken by him to have belonged to his "suspected classes" deserving imprisonment and hanging. Babu Kuar Singh was wise enough to foresee it and therefore feared going to Patna. He was left no alternative but either to join the rebels or to go to Patna to embrace imprisonment or hanging. He chose the former and the choice was natural for a brave man like him.

Babu Kuar Singh reached Arrah at night on the 26th July, 1857. He was presented a Guard of honour and was acknowledged as the Commander of the army. However Arrah was the scene of defence which is one of the stirring episodes of mutiny. Let me quote Surgeon Hall extensively about this defence, "It was the opinion of a small minority, that a house should be put into a state of defence and that in the event of mutiny or disturbance the Europeans should take shelter therein and endeavour to make a temporary stand; this proposal was negatived, at that time, by the majority. There was, however, fortunately one of the party who holding the above opinion had the resolution to act upon it and singly, possessed the means of carrying his plans into effect. This was Mr. Boyle, the Railway Engineer, who collected several cart loads of new bricks and built up with them the Verandah arches of a small two-storied building, originally destined for a billiard room and at a distance of sixty yards from his own house. The new walls though without mortar or cement of any kind, were artistically constructed, and formed a very sufficient defence against a market bullet. The low arches

beneath were, with the exception of rather a spacious loophole, entirely bricked up while on the upper floor, between the pillars, a sort of breast-wall was formed upon which numerous sand bags were placed, having intervals left between them for the guns of the besieged. Other arrangements were carried out in the interior. Into this improvised fortification, Mr. Boyle conveyed a large supply of rice, grain, biscuits and water with a small quantity of brandy and beer."

"The cry of "Wolf ! Wolf !!" from Patna and Dinapore having been so often heard without the appearance of danger, began after a time to be almost disregarded. Still the peril was the same as before. The three Sepoy regiments still threatened from Dinapore, the crisis was in fact approaching and "Wolf" at last came."

"On the evening of 25th, the following laconic epistle, directed "express urgent" was received by the judge,

"To the judge or Senior Civil officer, Arrah.

Dinapore, 25th July, 1857.

"Sir—A revolt among the native troops at Dinapore is expected to occur this day. Stand prepared accordingly.

Your obedient servant

W. Lydiard, Major

A.A.—General"

"Later in the day (about ten O'clock—Sunday 26 th July) Messrs. Delpoiroux and Hoyle, two railway inspectors, who lived on the Arrah side of the Sone, with another man, came spurring into the Judge's compound. Their story was brief, that the Sepoys had passed the river in force, were then engaged in burning and destroying the railway bungalows and that they themselves had fled for their lives; the number of the mutineers was not known, nor any particulars of the outbreak."

"The Europeans afterwards assembled at Mr. Boyle's house where they remained a few hours engaged in writing letters to friends

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1. Two months in Arrah—Mr. John Halls Asst. Surgeon, Arrah, This book has become extremely rare. Prof. Dr. K. K. Dutt, Head of the History Department, Patna college, has got a typed copy of this book. We are grateful to him for having kindly lent it to us.

both in India and England and sending a few extra stores to the front.....The Sikhs also took in a supply of water for their own use."

"In the evening the whole party, Europeans, Eurasians and Sikhs slept and watched by turns in the little fortress. The following account of their proceedings therein and of some subsequent events, is extracted from a private letter, written a few weeks after the scene which it describes:—".....We are altogether nine Europeans, six Eurasians and one native (the Deputy Collector) there were also fifty Sikh Police with us, whom we hoped our true men but could not at first be sure; afterwards they proved themselves to be of real sterling metal.....That night (Sunday, the 26 th July) we went into our fortified billiard room and bricked ourselves up. Had the Sikhs who were with us been treacherous, they might have eaten us up for a breakfast."

"On Monday morning up came the Sepoys, they broke open the Jail, looted the treasury of 70,000 rupees and were joined by the Jail guards, prisoners, and hundreds of bad characters from the neighbour village."

"All these assembled on a rising ground about 600 yards from and in free view of our position by sound of trumpet, and then moved down steadily towards us till they got within 200 yards, when their trumpets sounded a charge, and down they came at the double quick, shouting like demons, and firing as fast as they could,"

"The first rush of the vast force was certainly the most fearful; and judging of the feelings of others by my own I suspect few of us had much hope beyond that of selling our lives as dearly as possible. Indeed, had the rebels had the pluck to advance they might have kicked down our defences or have scaled the walls and overwhelmed us by their weight of numbers. Fortunately, however, they had not: and when their first attack had been repulsed, our hopes began to revive, especially as we all escaped providentially without a wound, and expected that relief must shortly come from Dinapore."

The English army under Captain Dunbar which was pursuing the mutineers and coming towards Arrah was defeated at the battle of Gangi Nala where Captain Dunbar lost his life and only twelve of his men returned to Dinapore.

From the 27th July to the 2nd August Arrah House was under siege when it was relieved by Major Eyne.

Let me submit that the spirit of mutineers at Arrah was tempered with by the able leadership of Babu Kuar Singh. He did not allow them to burn the records of the Collectorate. It was a fact that among the general public there were many in Arrah town who did not sympathise with the mutiny and sided with the British Government. The mutineers wanted to kill them. But it was Babu Kuar Singh who did not allow any atrocity to be committed in Arrah. There is nothing on record to prove that sepoy's under Babu Kuar Singh acted indecently, nothing to speak of perpetrating atrocities. The statement of Surgeon Hall quoted elsewhere in this article is eloquent of the rare quality of Babu Kuar Singh. Any thought of planning a general massacre of the besieged was repugnant to the heroic stand of Babu Kuar Singh. It was not the lack of 'pluck' and resourcefulness on the part of the rebels as Surgeon Hall suggests but the kind and heroic leadership of Babu Kuar Singh which saved the besieged from total destruction. How Major Vincent Eyne took reprisals! Pages of history are replete with repressive measures adopted by him at Arrah and Jagdishpur. He even destroyed the Hindu temple at Jagdishpur. The then Commander-in-chief writes "But regrets to have to disapprove of the destruction of the Hindu Temple at Jagdishpur by Major Eyne under the mistaken view of the duties of a Commander at the present crisis." Babu Kuar Singh saved even the records of the Collectorate, Major Vincent Eyne destroyed even the lifeless bricks of Jagdishpur let alone other atrocities. Bhojpur is proud of once having a leader like Babu Kuar Singh who on account of his sobriety, charitableness and heroic nature stands higher than any leader of the other party.

After the battle of Jagdishpur Babu Kuar Singh left for Sasaram Hills. He moved towards up-country to be in contact with other rebel leaders. Tantiatopi and Nana Saheb welcomed him as a brilliant leader. Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi was so much pleased with his qualities of head and heart and adventurous lead, that she offered him the post of Commander-in-chief of her army. In this march he had to fight the British army at Kalapi where his grand-son (Birbhajan Singh) was killed. Hearing the death news of his

grand-son he showed no sign of grief but with a sense of pride and pleasure he ordered his men for arranging proper burial. He reached near Cawnpore and learnt that the city was under the British army. Hearing the reversal of the rebellion he decided to get back to Jagdishpur and the Govt. offered a prize of 25000 rupees for the head of Babu Kuar Singh. However, the offer remained unaccepted. On his return journey from Cawnpore side to Jagdishpur on the 17 th March, 1858 he attacked Atraulia village in Azamgarh district and got possession over it. Under the command of Mr. Millman the English army was sent from Azamgarh. Babu Kuar Singh gave him a crushing defeat.

The important question is: How he concluded the rebellion? Did he falter? Did he order for humiliating retreat? Did he succumb to any dishonourable agreement? Did he lower down the national flag? Did he by his actions as a leader of the rebels retard in any way the realisation of the national aspiration for freedom from subjection? The answer is emphatic 'no'. He sacrificed himself and his family to keep the banner of freedom flying. He was never caught by British forces. From July 26, 1857 when he accepted the command of the insurgent Indian army at Arrah to the 21st April 1858 when he came back to his stronghold at Jagdishpur he waged successfully what is known as Guerilla warfare and never allowed British Commanders to let him down though he fought many a battle with them at different places from Lucknow to Jagdishpur.

Four British commanders including General Lugard and Captain Douglass with their units pursued Babu Kuar Singh who continued advancing towards Jagdishpur crossing the Ghoghra and the Ganges despite the fact that all river boats were sunk under Govt. order. The British commanders were at their wits' end to see the strategy of Babu Kuar Singh. General Lugard with his army was waiting for him on this side of the Ganges. As soon as Babu Kuar Singh crossed the Ganges the British army commenced firing. He got a bullet on his right hand. Instantaneously he cut it off and threw it into the Ganges. He was brought to Jagdishpur on an elephant. General Lugard could not catch him.

Babu Amar Singh, the younger brother of our hero heard of the arrival of his brother, collected a great army and went to Jagdishpur

to organise a fitting reception in honour of his brother. He met him there on the 21st. April 1858. Captain Lee Grande, stationed at Arrah could not tolerate the presence of the two brothers at Jagdishpur. He left Arrah for Jagdishpur to arrest Babu Kuar Singh who was lying on his death bed with his wound on his right hand. Babu Kuar Singh asked his brother Babu Amar Singh to meet Captain Lee Grand in an open battle. The British captain received a fatal sword blow from Babu Amar Singh. His army ran away from the field which was ringing with the victorious war cry of "Hail, Hail, Babu Amar Singh". The same moment Babu Kuar Singh left this world for ever.

Captain Lugard called generals from Azamgarh and Lucknow to defeat Babu Amar Singh. All the generals with a huge army failed to arrest Babu Amar Singh. Captain Lugard got dejected and felt ashamed, resigned his post and left India. Babu Amar Singh was rendered helpless only when the jungles were cleared.

During about ten months of leadership, Babu Kuar Singh proved himself a most temperate and merciful leader. Mr. Jolam James Hall, the assistant Civil surgeon at Arrah writes in his book, "Two months in Arrah":—

"During the time the Europeans at Arrah were shut up, Kuar Singh had several Christian European families in his power, all the members of which were found uninjured at his departure". As against this let me quote from "History of Indian Mutiny" by Mr. G. W. Forest (455) depicting the destruction of Jagdishpur by Major Vincent Eyne, "Fifty of the Sepoys took refuge in the palace of Kuar Singh, the whole of whom were shot down by the 10 men who hung up the bodies of the sepoys with their own blue shirts over the walls and left them to wither in the sun." To quote again surgeon Hall "Indeed ~~we~~ we are not aware that he ever participated in the atrocities which were generally committed by them. Even his opponents speak with respect, of his masterly retreat across the Ganges when closely pursued by the force under Sir E. Lugard". Mr. G. W. Forest says in his book quoted above. "He, Kuar Singh had no military training and he was advanced in his age when he assumed command of the field, but he soon proved his aptitude for

guerilla warfare. His strong will, dash and courage won the allegiance and devotion of his followers”.

It is necessary to add a few words about the economic effect of sepoy Mutiny on Shahabad. Principal Dr. B. B. Mazumdar M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D. has dealt with the adverse economic effects of the sepoy mutiny on Shahabad in an article published in the Indian Nation Pūja Supplement 1945. The Indigo Commission Report of 1861 (page 291) gives an account of the prices of agricultural products of Shahabad in 1855 and 1860. From a comparative study of the price lists in those two years Mr. Mazumdar concludes that “it is noticeable that the rise in prices at Shahabad was highest in the whole of the Bihar. No other district of Bihar was so profoundly affected by the movement of 1857 as Shahabad was. The disturbance of 1857 raised the prices not only of the consumption goods but also of agricultural implements and of the live stock. One of the causes which contributed to the rise in the prices of the agricultural commodities was the scarcity of agricultural labourers”. In a disturbed state when the entire district was overrun by the British army, agricultural industry and trade suffered as a whole. Being over-awed by the atrocities of Major Eyne people of Bhojpur Elaka left their homes and took shelter in the Jungles to save their lives. They spent the days in jungles, returned to their homes at night to take their meals. Agriculture and trade was thrown to dogs. The jungle fruits saved many lives. Had Major Eyne lived for a few days more at Jagdishpur, the condition of the people would have been terrible.

The clearance of the jungle resulted in the emergence of what is later on known as the Behea estate. “The jungles which formed part of the confiscated property of Kuar Singh, was finally cleared by the present proprietors of the Behea estate. Mr. Burrows, contractor of the East Indian Railway, had been presented with the lease of the jungle, on condition that he cleared a certain portion within two years but as it still afforded an asylum to the mutineers, more active measures became necessary, and Govt. offered six Rupees each bigha of land cleared by a certain date. With four thousand men at work, a broad path, half a mile wide was driven right through the jungle, while minor gaps were cut at right angles rendering the whole

area accessible and the further concealment of rebels impossible. The state was rapidly developed by Messrs. Barrows, Thomson and Mylne the grantees; a large number of wells were sunk; later the Behea branch canal was constructed through the entire length of the jungle Mahal; and the estate is now one of the most prosperous and highly cultivated areas in the district<sup>1</sup>".

1. The Shahabad Gazetteer. Page 171-72.



# HARAPRASAD DAS JAIN

(1848—1920)

*By*

(Mrs. Malabika Chaki, Fourth Year Class.)

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Fame seems to be as fickle and whimsical as fortune. More often than not she consigns those who have courted her with great assiduity to oblivion or dim obscurity. Sometimes, however, she confers her boon on one who has never sought her favour. But behind the apparent vagaries and inconsistencies of Dame Fame there is one underlying principle of selection of those who are crowned by her. Abiding fame, and not transient glory, can be attained only by those who have manifested the spirit of self-sacrifice and evinced the zeal for service to the cause of humanity. Babu Hara Prasad Das Jain lived a quiet and unostentatious life and disdained to court popularity. With unswerving determination he pursued one great ideal throughout his life. The ideal was of rendering the greatest possible help to the cause of suffering humanity—to minister to the comforts of the sick, destitute and wandering pilgrims and to dispel the darkness of ignorance from the minds of his fellow-beings. In order to realise this great objective he denied himself the luxuries which he could have enjoyed and sometimes appeared even to be miserly. But a true miser is one who loves money for the sake of money and not for achieving some ulterior object. Babu Haraprasd Das was like a bee gathering honey drop by drop from many a fragrant flowers, guarding it with utmost care and vigilance so that in course of time a big honey-comb might be made out of its little savings for the greater enjoyment of his fellow-creatures. In his life time he was merely one of the many notable gentlemen of the town of Arrah, but a quarter of a century after his death his name has become familiar to all educated persons of Bihar. This is mainly due to the fact that a college at Arrah is established in his name. With prophetic far-sight he visualized the existence of a first grade college at the head quarters of the district of Shahabad and with shrewd instinct of a successful man of the world he made provisions not only for the foundation of the college but also for its maintenance.

The most striking thing about his princely donation for the college is that he himself had not the benefit of English education, not to speak of collegiate education. One is apt to confuse, acquaintance with English language, with culture and urbanity but there are some who may be said to be cultured in the highest sense of the term though they have not been familiar with the language of our rulers. Babu Haraprasad Das was one of those few persons. His father Lal Shree Mandil Das was a Zamindar of the district. He was noted for his piety and generosity. In 1872 he endowed Rs. 8000 and landed property yielding an annual income of Rs. 7000 for religious and charitable purposes. He breathed his last in 1873 when Haraprasad Das was about 35 years of age.

Babu Haraprasad Das was educated at home through the medium of Urdu and Hindi. He used to study the religious works written in Hindi and Sanskrit but he preferred to write his letters and documents in Urdu script. Having inherited a considerable fortune he tried his level best to augment it with a view to render greatest good to the greatest number. He nursed the resources of his Zamindari with untiring efforts and perseverance. He used to visit his *mouzas* frequently. So his officers could neither find any opportunity to extort illegal gratifications from the tenants nor any loophole to embezzle their master's money. He encouraged his tenants to be frugal, hard-working and enterprising. He was ready to help them with loans of seeds or cash but he was very particular in seeing that leniency in realising his deeds would only promote lethargy and extravagance and would take away the sense of self respect of the debtors. He combined indigenous banking with Zamindari and this combination of functions saved his tenants from the clutches of those money-lenders who were bent upon driving them into the rank of the unfortunate landless labourers. By dint of his assiduity and careful management, Haraprasad Das was able to accumulate a large fortune. At the time of his death his Zamindari yielded an income of Rs. 50,000 per year and besides this he had several lacks of rupees in cash.

While engaged in earthly pursuits, Haraprasad Das did not forget even for a moment his duties to humanity. According to the instructions of his father he continued to distribute alms to the poor

and visiting holy places of the Jains. In the prime of his life he used to go out in pilgrimage every year. Sometimes he went alone, sometimes with his wife and relatives. In this way he paid several visits to Rajgir, Pawapuri, Girnar and Mt. Abu and to many other holy places. Wherever he went he erected temples, installed holy images of the Tirthankars and made adequate arrangements for their continued worship. His religious zeal was not satisfied even with this. He wanted to have constantly before his eyes the representation of the holy places and the holy men. To satisfy the yearning of his heart he got erected in 1902 two palatial houses and employed a highly paid sculptor from Jaipur to reproduce in marble the famous holy places and the images of 24 Tirthankaras. In the same year he executed a Registered Deed on the 16th March, making a free gift of the houses to the public. In the Trust-Deed executed On the 31 March, 1918 he himself recounts with evident satisfaction "I have got two houses built at a high cost adjacent to each other for Dharmashala in the mahalla Mahajantoli No. 1 at Arrah and on the upper storey of one of those houses I have got constructed in white marbles in miniature Sheekharjee and Shree Kailashjee and have got the temple of Pauapuri along with the tank constructed in white marble as also the temple of Shree Champapuri and in these I have installed the Charans of the Gods. In the houses are installed the God Shree Adinath, Parashnath, Mahabir Swami, the 24 Tirthankars and a few Pratimas. A dispensary and a Pathshala have also been established, and Jain pilgrims and travellers as well as Hindus have been putting up there in. He endowed large estates for meeting the expenses of Dharamshala, School & Dispensary. On the 28th November, 1919 he made additional gifts for the same purpose. At this early date he made arrangements for providing decent food for one day to all travellers who might put up in the Dharamshala. He used to take great delight in feeding people and often invited persons of different classes to take meal in his house. Every year in the month of Bhado he distributed alms to the beggars at every holy temple of Jainism. Similarly on the occasion of Anant Chaturdashi festival he used to distribute Ata and Gur to a large number of Brahmins.

Like all mortal beings Babu Hara Prasad Das Jain had his share

of grief. He was not blessed with a son. To satisfy his yearnings for a child he adopted a son. With advance of years he became partially deaf. But he was so very intelligent that he could follow a conversation mostly by observing the movement of lips. He used to keep slate and pencil before him and his visitors had merely to write their objects of interview. Once he had known the objective of the visitors, he could hold conversation freely without taking recourse to writing. This is why he could entertain his visitors with humour and witicism. Humour was the saving grace of his life. Even in the dark days of his mortal illness he did not lose his sense of humour even for a moment. He died in December 1920 and his pious wife breathed her last on the 2nd January, 1946, at the age of over hundred years.

It was at the fag end of his life, that he came to think of establishing a College at Arrah. The credit of setting up before him the idea of establishing a first grade College at Arrah, goes to two persons one, a veteran old leader of the Arrah public, Choudhury Karamat Hussain and the other, Babu Suparshwa Dass Gupta, then a young man who had just finished his law lectures. As soon as the suggestion was put before him he agreed to it. The last Trust-Deed which he executed on the 13th June, 1919, reveals him as a man of large ideas absolutely free from sectarian partisanship and communal passion. He appointed Trustees not simply from the members of Jain Community, to which he belonged but also from the caste Hindus and non Hindus and expressed a desire that Choudhuri Karamat Hussain should always be associated with the College as one of the members of its managing committee. I quote below a few relevant paragraphs from the aforesaid Trust-Deed.

Now, I have grown very weak and my age also has exceeded seventy years : and it is my wish that a college or any other institution concerning education or a boarding house for the stay of Agarwal students be established in my name. To meet the expenses thereof, I do set apart a sum of Rs. 60,000/- (Rupees sixty thousand) and the bungalow along with its compound situated in Mohalla Nawadah, which has been already gifted away, be utilised for the college.

Besides this, I (the donor) have started the construction of a few temples in some places, whose details are given below, as a religious work and with a view to benefit in the next world and they are incomplete as yet. It is incum-

bent on me and I am duty bound to bring those works also to completion. But as there will be delay in the establishment of the college and the completion of the temples also which are under construction, will take time, I (the donor) in a state of perfect health and in the exercise of my full senses and reason and after examining all pros and cons without acting under any undue pressure and without being influenced by any body, with a view to the perpetuation of my name and also with a view to securing benefits to myself in the next world, do religiously dedicate a sum of one Lac of rupees, the half of which amounts to Rupees fifty thousand ( Rs. 50,000/- ) whose details are given below and entrust it to the aforesaid Panches (Trustees) for being spent over the works detailed below. This (i. e. this amount of Rupees one Lac) includes such deeds also as I had got executed in the name of Shree Adinath Bhagwan for expenditure over such works, before I executed this Trust deed.

And in the performance of the works detailed below, the aforesaid Panches (Trustees) have and will continue to have the power to spend the dedicated amount (as detailed below) over the items detailed below; and should carry on the management and administration of the college that would be established in my name and should appoint a managing Committee for the Educational Institution (to be established) and should make those persons its members whom they consider fit and proper

In this Educational Institution a Jain Scholar be appointed to impart instruction in Jainism, which will not be compulsory; provided there be no difficulties in its establishment on account of this.

May it be noted that at the time when I (the donor) executed the Waqf deed on 31st August, 1918 there was no idea of starting a college at Arrah. Therefore a sum of Rs. 1500/- (Rupees fifteen hundred) was given for help in reading and writing of the students at Arrah or abroad. But now since the idea of starting a college has been entertained and there is a strong hope that it will come into being, the Panches (Trustees) in the aforesaid deed are hereby requested that in case the college is established they should utilise these fifteen hundred rupees also for the expenses of this local B.A. College

And Chaudhury Karamat Hussain son of Chaudhury Leaqut Hussain (peace be on him) shall be one of the members of the Managing Committee that will be appointed for the management of the college affairs.

These few sentences have been written in order that they may be made use of when a necessity arises.

Details of the works (to be done) :—

1. A sum of Rs. 60,000/- be spent over the establishment of a college or any other educational institution, or boarding house for the Agarwal students and this will be established in my name.

2. A sum of Rs. 12,000/- for the sake of constructing a temple of the Terah Panthi Sect at Shikharjee and a sum of Rs. 2,000/- at Pawapurjee and

a sum of Rs. 2000/- at Champapurjee and a sum of Rs. 2000/- at Girnarjee, be spent over the works which have already begun.

3. And a sum of Rs. 10,000/- be spent over the installation ceremony (of idols) in these temples.

4. Regarding the sum of Rs. 12,000/- which remains ( unspent ) the Panches (Trustees) have and will continue to have the power of spending whatever amount is left after meeting the expenses over items Nos. 2 and 3, on item No. 1.

5. The Trustees will spend the amount unspent after the works above-mentioned are completed, according to the joint opinion of the Trustees by majority of votes.

6. The Trustees are to take and adopt all proper steps and measures for the establishment of the college or any other Educational Institution and in this also they should by the joint opinion and by the majority of votes.\*

The college for which he made provision in 1919 was established in 1942 and has now got 1009 students on the roll.

\*Prof. Ramprasad Lal has kindly translated the document from Urdu. I am grateful to Babu Sitabchand and Babu Suparshwa Das Gupta for kindly supplying me with many of the details contained in this article.

# BISHESWAR SINGH & SALIGRAM SINGH

By

(Birendra Kishore Sinha, First Year Arts)

Shahabad is a land of heroes. It has produced great leaders both in the domain of practical politics and that of speculative thought not only in ancient and medieval India, but also in the modern age. Shahabad has got the proud distinction of producing the first Behari acting Chief Justice of the Patna High Court, (Sir Jwala Prasad) the only two Behari Hindu Judges of the same court (Mr. Justice S. P. Verma and Mr. Justice Bhubeneshwar Prasad Sinha) the oldest and the most famous of the living Journalists of India and the greatest of the Vice-chancellors of the Patna University (Dr. S. Sinha), the present registrar of the same University (Mr. Jagatnandan Sahay), the present advocate-general (Mr. Mahabir Prasad), the present Secretary of the Inter-University Board of India, Ceylon and Burma (Mr. K. P. Sinha) and a host of other great men. It is a matter of great satisfaction to us that the first genuine leader of the Beharees also hailed from this district. He is Babu Bisheswar Singh of Kulharia. Describing the condition of public life in Bihar in 1893, Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha says, "the only centre of public activity at the time was then, as now, Patna; and the only towering personality was the late Mr. Bisheswar Singh, the founder (with the aid of his younger brother, Mr. Saligram Singh) of the Bihar National College. His house was the *rendezvous* of the Biharee politicians of the day, and one often found there assembled on an evening, amongst men of the older generation, the late Rai Bahadur Gajadhar Prasad (sometimes a member of the Bengal Legislative Council), and amongst those of the comparatively younger, the late Mahesh Narayan—the first and, till now, the greatest Biharee Journalist—and the late Rai Bahadur Krishna Sahay, for sometime a member of the Executive Council of this Province. It is noteworthy that when Babu Bisheswar Singh joined the Bar at Patna many of the later leaders of Bihar like Maharaja Sir Lakshmeshwar Singh of Darbhanga, Mr. Mahesh Narayan, Rai Siva Sankar Sahay Bahadur were in their teens and men like Mazhar-el Haque, Nandkishore Lal, Sir Ganesh

Dutta Singh and Sir Ali Imam were boys below ten and eminent social figures like Jwala Prasad and Deep Narayan Singh were not born. At such a time Babu Bisheswar Singh was the only centre of rally of the young and aspiring sons of Bihar.

Bisheswar Singh and Saligram Singh were two brothers, both of whom were equally gifted. They belonged to a sturdy and loyal Rajput family of Kulheria in the district of Shahabad. Their father, a notable Zamindar Babu Mitrajit Singh rendered conspicuous services to the British Government in the dark days of the Mutiny, when whole of the district was convulsed by a great political upheaval. The British Government expressed their gratefulness to Babu Mitrajit Singh by granting him a fairly large Zamindari and also a certificate of distinction signed by Queen Victoria herself. Babu Mitrajit was one of the few Bihar Zamindars of those days who realised the value of modern education and arranged to educate his sons on modern lines. Bisheswar Singh born in 1849, and Saligram Singh in 1852 were both placed at the newly established Arrah Zila School where they prosecuted their studies for a few years. They were then admitted into the Patna Collegiate School from which they passed the Entrance Examination. They then read for two years in the Patna College and passed the Intermediate Examination which was then known as the First Arts Examination. With a view to avail themselves of the benefits of higher cultural life of Calcutta they got themselves admitted in the B. A. Class in the Calcutta Presidency College. Babu Bisheswar Singh did not care to take the B. A. degree. He passed the District Court Law Examination and joined the Patna Bar as Vakil. By dint of his scholarly attainments, eloquence and integrity of purpose he was soon able to secure lucrative practice in the Court. His eminence as a lawyer, however, only opened the avenue to public activity to which he wanted to dedicate himself from his early years. He felt that the chief cause of the backwardness of Bihar was the lack of higher education amongst the middle class people. He tried his level best to remove this longfelt want. He looked at the problems of the country not from a narrow provincial point of view but from an all-Indian angle of vision. He was a staunch



nationalist and joined the Indian National Congress from its very inception. He, along with his brother were two of the first delegates from Bihar to join the session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1886.

Babu Saligram Singh having his centre of activity in the metropolis of the then huge province of Bengal attained far greater renown than his brother. He passed the B.A. examination in 1874, graduated in Law in 1877 and joined the Calcutta High Court Bar in the same year. He was able to build up a large practice within a short time. The secret of his success lay in his diligence, perseverance, straightforwardness, eloquence and charming manners. His qualities as a lawyer are highly appreciated by the public, his colleagues in the Bar and the honourable judges of the High Court. Sir Lawerence Jenkins, the then Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court made the following observations on the occasion of unveiling his portrait, a few years after his death, "Mr. Saligram Singh was a fine type of Biharman, of commanding presence, of kindly temperament, gifted with a rich fund of strong commonsense, and above all guided by an integrity of purpose that assured to him the confidence of those before whom it was his duty to plead and the respect of those to whom he was opposed. He was one of those happy persons in whom the carping spirit of envy could strike no root, and his generous outlook endeared him to all with whom he came into contact." The friendship he contacted with the leaders of Calcutta society attracted to his fine bungalow at Koilowar, situated just on the bank of river Sone, a large number of visitors during every holiday.

Saligram Singh was great not only as a lawyer but also as a legislator. As early as 1897 he was technically nominated but in reality elected to the legislative council of Bengal by the municipalities of the Patna Division. Again in 1899 he was nominated to the Council as a representative of the Bihar landholders' Association, of which he happened to be a prominent member. As a member of the legislature he rendered conspicuous service to the country. Government appointed him to various committees and commissions and he spared no pains in discharging his duties as a member of these bodies. A few days after his death, Sir Andrew Fraser, the then Lieutenant Governor of West Bengal which included Bihar and

Orissa said about him, "I personally knew him and highly valued him. He never spoke without having something to say that was worth-hearing and likely to throw light on the subject under discussion. He was an able lawyer, and invariably courteous, considerate and tactful. His intimacy with me led me to appreciate very highly his broad views, wide sympathy and genial character. He was honest and independent and desirous to render assistance to the Government and advance the interests of the people. I had frequently had to consult him, and I always felt that I received from him the best advice in view of the interest, (sometimes conflicting) in the matter under consideration at the time. I specially valued the advice and assistance which he was rendering to me in regard to legislation affecting the relations between the landlords and the tenants, as he understood well the interests of both the parties. The advice which he was able to give me was, therefore, of great value."

The two gifted brothers were the pioneers of higher Education in Bihar. In 1889 they established the Bihar National College which has helped to diffuse Collegiate Education in thousands of middle class families of Bihar during the last 50 years. Being inspired by national ideals, they called the institution the Bihar National College. It should be remembered that the College was founded only four years after the establishment of the Indian National Congress. At that time there was only one Government College in Bihar, namely the Patna College and there was only one Non-Government College, recently founded by Tej Narayan Singh at Bhagalpur. The two brothers not only gave land but also contributed handsomely to the College in its early days of struggling existence, when it had barely a hundred students. They used to provide free boarding and lodging to many a poor and deserving students of the College. They selected the best men then available as Professors of the College. The sagacity and farsightedness of Babu Saligram Singh is proved by the fact that he selected a man like Mr. D. N. Sen first as Professor and then as the Principal of the College. The Bihar National College under the fostering care of the Babus of Kulharia and the able administration of Principal D. N. Sen, Syed Moinul Haq has become one of the foremost educational institution of the Province.

Babu Bisheswar Singh died in 1899 at the comparatively early age of fifty. His younger brother also breathed his last in 1905 at the age of fiftythree. They are no more in our midst; but the Bihar National College will always keep their memory fresh in the minds of the people. Babu Sashi Sekheshwar Singh, B. L. advocate Patna High Court is now the president of the Governing Body of the College and Babu Haraballav Narayan Singh B. A. grandson of Babu Bisheswar Singh is the secretary of the institution.

# RAJA RAJESHWARI PRASAD SINHA

( 1866—1903 )

*By*

(Sukdeo Singh Sanyal, Third Year Arts.)

There is traditional enmity between Lakshmi, the goddess of Wealth, and Saraswati, the goddess of Learning. They are said to be rivals for the affection of their common husband, Visnu, and as such they seldom reside together. But in the case of the Raj family of Surajpura they seem to have forgotten their jealousy and hostility and to have agreed to live together in a spirit of happy reconciliation. At least for three successive generations the Rajas of Surajpura have been not only the possessors of great fortune but also notable votaries of the Goddess of Learning. Dewan Ram Kumar Sinha, the father of Raja Rajeshwari Prasad Sinha was a patron and poet of Hindi literature. He composed many devotional poems and songs under the pseudonym 'Kumar'. He used to worship Siva and Parvati, with rare devotion. It is no wonder that the son of such a man should be inspired by the Muses to produce high class poems and dramas. The Raj Rajeshwari Granthawali, published by his son Raja Radhika Raman Prasad Sinha in 1937, reveals to the lovers of Hindi literature, a poet and a dramatist of exceptional merit. The name of Raja Radhika Raman Prasad Sinha M.A. has become a household word to the Hindi-knowing public. He is equally at home in Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali, Urdu and English literature. A study of the biography of his father will show that this versatility of his genius is a legacy from his ancestors.

The ancestors of Raja Rejeshwari Prasad Sinha were hereditary Dewans of the Dumraon Raj family. In 1812 Francis Buchanan visited their palace and described them as "very rich"<sup>1</sup>. The family

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1. "The family of the old Kanungoes has here a considerable property, and is very rich.....There are two brothers belonging to this family, and one of them is the Stewart (Dewan) of the Bhojpur Rajah. His house, as well as that of his brother, is larger than that of his master, and entirely built of brick. Both are built on a fine rising ground and from their magnitude look well at a distance." Francis Buchanan, Shahabad Report, Page 369.

is said to have migrated from Mirzapore to Surajpura, at the beginning of the 18th century. Dewan Ram Kumar Sinha rendered considerable help to the British Government during Sepoy Mutiny. The mutineers besieged the fort of Surajpura. But the Dewan Saheb cleverly pacified them. The Sone canal passed through a portion of his Zamindari and he received a sum of one lakh and eighty five thousands of rupees as the price of his land. But he generously handed back the money to the Government, because he realised that the canal would be of immense help to his tenants. During the terrible famine of 1873-74 he distributed alms to thousands of people and opened free kitchens.

Raja Rejeshwari Prasad Sinha was born in the month of Pousa (November-December) in 1866 A.D. Like all men of genius he was lively, wilful and naughty in his childhood. Though born in a highly aristocratic family, he did not care to observe the rigid exclusiveness of his order and mixed freely on terms of equality and perfect friendship with boys belonging to the ordinary family. From his very boyhood he manifested great love and aptitude for manly exercises and physical feats. His father did not care to send him to any school because he could afford to engage the best tutors to train up his son. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was not the custom of the noblemen of Bihar to send their children to public institutions. Rajeshwari Prasad studied Urdu as his vernacular, because in those days Hindi had not become fashionable with the Upper classes, especially with the Kayasthas. But his father did not like to give a lop-sided education to his son, and therefore, he encouraged him to master the fountain heads of modern Indian languages—Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. It is noteworthy that the late Raja Saheb in his writings scrupulously avoids all traces of the influence of Urdu and Persian literature. After having mastered the oriental languages, he turned his attention towards the English language and literature. He acquired great proficiency in that language too. Later in his life, he was lured by the sweetness of the Bengali literature and learnt it so thoroughly that he could translate a difficult work like Rabindranath's '*Chitrangada*' into Hindi. The secret of his success in mastering so many languages lay in the fact that he was gifted with a highly retentive memory and excep-

tionally keen intellect. He could finish a volume of about five hundred pages in a couple of days and could reproduce the facts described in it with great accuracy.

Raja Rajeshwari Prasad Sinha did not neglect physical culture in course of his pursuit of learning and knowledge. He was a fine type of Bhojpuri young man—tall, slim and robust. He took great delight in riding, hunting, and wrestling. He practised wrestling regularly with the well known *pahalwans*. He invited wrestlers from Muttra and other parts of the United Provinces and encouraged them to reside in his capital. He used to offer handsome rewards to those who came out successful in a wrestling competition.

Rajeshwari Prasad Sinha was married to the daughter of Dewan Chaturbhuj Sahai, Zamindar of Parmanandpur, District Muzaffarpur at the age of fifteen. The marriage was solemnized with great eclat. The then Maharajah of Dumraon, Maheshwar Baksha Singh Bahadur and many other notable personalities of Behar attended it. Unfortunately within a year of this happy incident his father breathed his last. He had been trained by his father in the art of administering his vast Zamindari. So he did not find it necessary to take any external help in managing his property. Despite his generosity he enhanced the income of the Raj by shrewd and businesslike administration.

The Raja Saheb maintained a perfect equilibrium between his devotion to wordly affairs and his attachment to the fine Arts. The greatest testimony to his balance of mind is that he did not give himself up to luxury and extravagance, though he came to possess a vast wealth at the early age of sixteen. He knew the art of living and enjoyed the rare moments of his leisure in the company of noted poets and musicians. He took deep interest in vocal as well as instrumental music and had a fair knowledge of both.

True to the tradition of the ancient nobility of India Raja Rajeshwari Prasad extended his patronage to men of letters and especially to poets. Poet Prabhakar, grandson of Mahakabi Padmakar, Mishra Sway Sewak, Kabi 'Shant' and the noted poet Lakshmi Ram adorned his court. He used to hold competitions in extempore versifications and reward the best literary Talents.

Amongst his friends were Bhartendu Harischandra and Rabindranath Tagore. Bhartendu honoured him by a visit to Surajpura, where he lived as his guest for several days. He returned the visit by putting up with Bhartendu at Benares. Tagore came for a change to Surajpura and stayed there for a pretty long time. This close association with the poet must have inspired him to present the *Chitrangada* to the Hindi-knowing public. Besides these two outstanding figures in the literary world of Northern India, the Raja Saheb came in intimate contact with great intellectual giants like Sir Rameshchandra Dutt, Sham-Sul-Ulma, Nawab Imdad Imam, Justice Anukulchand Chatterjee and Maharaja Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore.

Raja Rajeshwari Prasad Sinha was a very kind-hearted man. He endowed a charitable hospital at Surajpura and invited Sir Stuart Bailey the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal (which included Behar, Orissa and Assam at that time) to lay down its foundation. His Honour gladly accepted the invitation and came over to Surajpura. The hospital is rendering great service to the poor and suffering humanity. The people of the town of Arrah cherish his memory with a feeling of deep gratitude because it is due to his munificence that the water works of town have been constructed. In 1892 Mr Skrine the then Collector of Arrah convened a meeting of the notable persons of the district with a view to collect funds for removing the scarcity of pure drinking water. In response to his appeal, the Raja Saheb promised that he would make good all deficits after the public had contributed for the purpose. He redeemed his pledge by making a princely donation of one lakh and fifty thousand rupees. The Government showed their appreciation of his public spirit by conferring upon him the title of 'Raja' in 1894. It is a pity that such a promising career was cut short at the early age of thirty seven. He breathed his last on Monday, the 6th April, 1903.

The Raja Saheb composed a large number of poems, a few of which only have been published in his works. His poems have been divided into eight heads as follows—(१) प्रेम परिमल (२) सौंदर्य-सुधा (३) श्रृंगार-सुहाग (४) उक्तं-उल्लास (५) विरह-वेदना (६) श्रुत-रसाश्रुत (७) भक्ति-भावना (८) स्फुट सुमन. He inherited devotional spirit of his father. The following quotations from his works will illustrate his poetic powers:—

नैन ये स्याम-रंग में रोंगे  
लहे अमित सुख जा छवि लहि कै, तासो कहा विराने  
ध्यान-ध्यान जप-जोग नेम-व्रत, एकौ कछु न करिहौं  
केवल वही कृष्ण की मूरति, अपने हिय में धरिहौं  
नम छायो घनश्याम घने लखि, मोरन जिमि उतसाहैं  
सुकु-पक्ष-रिपु घोर चोर जिमि, कृष्ण पच्छ ही चाहैं

Then again—

नैन वसै वही माधुरी मूरति, साँवरे-रँग में अंग रँगै  
और को ध्यान न चित्त चढ़ै, वही साँवरो छैल हियौ उमगै  
कान सुनै वही नाम, उन्हीं पद-पंकज प्रीति में चित्त पगै  
प्राण जो 'प्यारे' पयान कर, ब्रज-माटी में जाय कै माटी लगे

The Raja Saheb evinced considerable dramatic skill in his original drama "Birbala." The hero of the drama is Chandra Gupta Maurya and the heroine Birbala the daughter of Selucus. The event centres round the elemental conflict between Hindu culture and Hellenic civilisation. Selucus makes an effort to emulate the success of his master and to complete his work by subjugating the Trans-Indus territories of Northern India. Chandra Gupta rallied all his forces to resist the onslaught of the Greek hero. He exhorts his soldiers with the following words :—

"आर्यकुल के गौरव तुम्हीं लोग हौ, तुम्ही लोग भारत के प्रिय पुत्र हौ । भारत को जो आशा मरोसा है, केवल तुम्हीं पर है । देश के हितार्थ और पराये सुखार्थ जो शरीर त्याग करता है वह परलोक में अक्षय अनन्त सुख भोगता है । कल यदि समरानल में वृद्धवनिता पर्यन्त मस्मीभूत होयें, जगत में यदि आर्य्यनाम पर्यन्त लोप हो जाय, तथापि एक भी मनुष्य जीवित रहते इस भूमि को स्लेच्छों के हस्तगत न होने दें, सब आदमियों को यही प्रण करना चाहिये ।

He himself leads his inspired soldiers to the battlefield and attains a notable victory. His valour attracts the daughter of Selucus. Cupid overcomes all the difficulties inherent in a love-affair between members of two hostile camps belonging to two different races. Birbala offers her hand to Chandra Gupta and the latter accepts it cordially. The marriage symbolises the union between Indian spirituality and Greek materialism. The Raja Saheb selected a grand



theme for his drama and offered to modern India the high ideal of a happy reconciliation of Nationalism with Internationalism.

The memory of the Raja Saheb is perpetuated by the Raj Rajeshwari Library at Surajpura which contains the rich and varied collection made by him. His worthy sons have also set up a High English School at Surajpura in the revered name of their deceased father. Raja Radhika Raman Prasad Sinha has written a number of valuable books in Hindi. He is regarded as an authority on the subject as the Patna University has appointed him paper setter and examiner at the M. A. examination. His Excellency, the Chancellor of the Patna University has nominated him a Fellow of the University. His younger brother Kumar Sir Rajiva Ranjan Prasad Sinha M.A. is the President of the Behar Legislative Council.

# SIR JWALA PRASAD

(1875-1933)

*By*

(Prakash Bahadur Agrawal. Second Year Arts.)

Sir Jwala Prasad was one of the greatest men of modern Behar and by far the most illustrious son of Shahabad under the British Crown. He came of a distinguished Kayastha family of this district. His great-grand-father, Munshi Ajaib Lal was a well known scholar of his time; and his grand-father Babu Mahabir Prasad was equally well versed in Arabic and Persian literatures. He practised as a Vakil. Sir Jwala's father, Babu Jagdam Sahai, was a brilliant member of the Provincial Civil Service. Sir Jwala was born in March 1875 in the village of Bharsara, in the Pargana of Behea, district Shahabad.

He was admitted in the Arrah Zilla School at an early age and passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in the year 1888, when he was barely 13 years of age. This shows that like Wolsey and Pitt, the Younger, he was a precocious child. He was married in the same year as he passed the Entrance Examination. For some time he read in the Patna College, but he graduated with first class Honours in English from the Muir Central College, Allahabad in 1893. He topped the list of successful candidates. Two years later; he took the L. L. B. degree from the Allahabad University and attained similar distinction.

By his scholastic attainments he was entitled to the Elliot Scholarship of the Allahabad University. Had he availed of it he could have gone to England for higher studies but he preferred not to go abroad. This reluctance to receive a foreign degree reveals the sturdy independence of his character even in his young-age days. He began practising as a lawyer at Allahabad, but yearned for coming back to the head quarters of his native land Arrah. But at that time the Calcutta High Court did not allow the graduates of Universities other than the University of Calcutta to practise in any court under its jurisdiction. Young Jwala Prasad was determined to overcome the obstacles and he prepared such a strong

memorandum in favour of abolition of the restriction, that the Calcutta High Court had to throw open the doors of all the courts under it to all the law graduates of different Indian Universities. Sir T. S. Macpherson (then Mr.) referred to this fact in 1914 and observed "The war which he waged so successfully to secure the removal of the Bar against the graduates of the Universities of one Province practising in other Province with a different University showed the stuff the young lawyer was made of". Mr. Jwala Prasad enrolled himself as a pleader in the district court of Arrah in 1896. For a short period he wavered in the choice of his career. He accepted the temporary Munsifship, but threw it off and came back to the Arrah Court. By virtue of his all common diligence and extra-ordinary erudition he was soon able to build up a large practice for himself. He was equally brilliant in the Civil as well as in Criminal side. The Government recognised his merit and appointed him Government Pleader and Public Prosecutor. It is the habits of Public Prosecutors to emphasize only the points which would bring conviction upon the accused. But Jwala Prasad was in the habit of placing before the court not only the points against the accused, but also those which might go in his favour. Having found him once arguing some points in favour of an accused, the Sessions Judge remarked, "Are you appearing for the prosecution or the defence". Sir Jwala Prasad boldly replied, "For neither; I am appearing for the Crown." This fairness of mind and independence of character marked him out for the post of a Judge of the Patna High Court.

The Provincial Government recognised his worth and merit by, conferring upon him the title of Rai Sahib in 1914, and of Rai Bahadur the very next year.

In 1915 he was appointed a Judge of the Patna High Court in which he took his seat upon the Bench in 1916. He was such a modest character that he persistently refused to believe that he had been actually appointed a Judge of the High Court, even though he was informed by no less a person than the Lieutenant Governor of Behar and Orissa. He is said to have remarked, "Are you joking my Lord?" Mr. P. C. Manuk, lifelong friend of Sir Jwala related in the High Court in 1933 the following incidents, 'Speaking of his appointment to the High Court before he had actually taken

his seat on the the Bench he said to me that he felt serious misgivings regarding his lack of familiarity with and experience of the principles of the English Common Law, Equity and Jurisprudence, two branches of the law which do not usually come within the range of the Mufussil practitioners, who on the other hand may be thoroughly and, completely equipped in all matters depending on the statutory and customary laws of the land. To my encouraging reply, that he would soon pick up these principles as he went along and he need not be overduly depressed by his inexperience on the topic, he gave a most emphatic negative—I can hear him speak though the years have rolled on since then, “No, no,” he said.”

Further, he observed, “A Judge of the High Court must not trust to that; I have already started studying all the leading English cases and I am going steadily through Halsbury’s Laws of England.”

As the Judge of the High Court Sir Jwala Prasad distinguished himself by his scrupulous honesty, eagerness to render justice irrespective of mere technicalities of law and above all, by the independence of his views. In 1921 when Sir Dawson Miller went on leave Sir Jwala Prasad was appointed the officiating Chief Justice of the Patna High Court. In his reply to the congratulatory speeches delivered by the members of the Bar he observed, “Before taking seat upon the Bench in the year 1916, I set to myself the ideal that “independance would be my watch word and Duty my guide, and I invoked the aid of the Divine-Dispensor of Justice to help me in keeping up this ideal. I do evoke again to-day His aid to give me courage and strength in discharge of the new office, which I have been called upon to occupy.” After his death Sir Courtney Terell, the then Chief Justice of the High Court observed; “I well know that nothing troubled his mind more than the technicalities and delay and complications with which that law (Criminal Law) is afflicted. His practical knowledge of human affairs and of the life in the Mofussil enabled him to see through the futilities invented by technical lawyers without practical experiences of the lives of the people. There lies on my tables at the present moment a scheme which he had himself drawn up for the simplification of th procedure of Criminal Investigation and for the sweeping aside of many technicalities.” Many of the judgements delivered by Sir Jwala

Prasad have become classical and are quoted with respect by lawyers and judges.

Sir Jwala Prasad did not confine his activities to the study, practising and administering of law. He took an active interest in all progressive movements, outside politics. While he was a member of the Arrah Bar he took a lively interest in the local self Government of the country. He became a member of the Arrah Local Board in 1897 and became its Vice-Chairman in 1904. He discharged the duty of this office till 1915. He became a member of the Shahabad District Board in 1904 and rendered conspicuous services as a member of its finance committee. Many of the village roads in this district are constructed through his effort. He was also for a long time Commissioner of the Arrah Municipality and spared no efforts to establish the Drainage System and Flushing System within the Municipal areas.

Sir Jwala played a leading part in the educational world. It was due to his effort that the beautiful Hostel of Arrah Zila School was constructed. He himself contributed Rs. 1000 for the purpose. He was also an Advocate of female education and started The Purdah Girls School at Arrah. He was a foundation member of the Senate of the Patna University and always exercised his power and influence for furthering the interest of students. The compartmental system of examination in the Patna University was introduced mainly through his effort. For a long period he was the president of the Behar Young Men's Institute, and our present Principal Dr. B. B. Majumdar was associated with him in the capacity of the Secretary of the Institute. It was due to their joint effort that the buildings of the Institute are thoroughly repaired and overhauled.

In religion Sir Jwala was a Theosophist. The Theosophist Hall at Bankipore Patna is called after him Sir Jwala Hall. He was a man of deep piety. He used to give to poor students monetary aids. He took great delight in feeding people. High office and great public honour did not make him arrogant. He retained his simple unostentatious ways to the very end of his life.

# CHOULDHRY KARAMAT HUSSAIN

(1873—1928)

*By*

Prof. Devendra Kumar, M. A.

—:o:—

It is a tragedy, indeed for the British rule in India, to see a galaxy of top rank Indians, at one time most devoted and loyal subjects, prepared to lay down their life and all in the cause of the British Empire, turning staunchest critics of the same, towards the later periods of their lives. The loyal antecedents of Choudhry Karamat Hussain and his family viewed in the light of his patriotic and inspiring later days activities bring this fact into a very bold relief. The ancestors of Choudhry Saheb came to Arrah in the time of Emperor Firoz Shah, 600 years ago. Later on they came in possession of Jagirs and Zemindari of the whole Arrah town, through an imperial Farman. This family was on very friendly terms with that of Babu Kuar Singh of the 1857 fame and once much before the Mutiny, when the latter expressed its desire of being a fellow landlord of Arrah town, the Choudhries gave away two thirds of the same to it. It was this share which was at last confiscated by the Government from Babu Kuar Singh after the suppression of the Mutiny, but the remaining one-third continued to be in the possession of Choudhry family, loyal and faithful as it remained during those fateful days.

When the Mutiny broke out, Choudhry Basarat Ali the grandfather of Choudhry Karamat Hussain helped the Government with all his might and means, making full use of the arms in his possession, distributing them to his trusted followers to fight against the rebels, and procuring food for the European and the Sikh soldiers, who were worn out with fatigue and cut off from all resources from outside. Choudhry Liaquat Hussain, his father was the first Honorary Magistrate in the District and the only Beharee to be invited in the Darbar after the mutiny.

Born in such a family of traditional loyalty, Choudhry Karamat Hussain, following in the footsteps of his ancestors, helped the Government every now and then in all possible ways. During the Great War No. 1, he did yeoman's service by contributing heavily to

loyalty and threw himself heart and soul in the thick of the Movement, soon becoming the President of the District Congress Committee, Member of the Provincial Congress Committee, and again a member of the All India Congress Committee. During his association with the Congress his contribution to the cause of Hindu Moslem Unity was unique and the Choudhry family as a whole apart from political affiliations, has been regarded as a symbol of that Unity ever since.

In the year 1922, the Behar Provincial Political Conference was held at Arrah, and Choudhriji was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee. The speech delivered by him in that capacity was breathing in patriotism, breadth of outlook and sincerity of the highest order, and gives an inkling into the sturdiness of character of the man speaking. As a man, he was very unostentatious, strict to the principle of 'simple living and high thinking', giving no cause to the citizens to feel that he was the master of the town, mixing unreservedly with high or low, rich or poor, and showing towards his tenants a uniformly exemplary consideration.

Ordinarily any other man in the midst of such all-absorbing pre-occupations, and tiring operations, would have found it impossible to give any thing like a minute attention to the needs of his family, but Choudhriji was very careful in such matters and especially the education of his sons. He had four sons and as soon as they grew up to impressionable age he discontinued all merry-makings with the accompaniment of professional music and dance which practice was a mark of respectability and nobility in those days and made the best possible arrangement for their education. It is indeed as a result of his extra ordinary keen interest and care that all of his sons are highly cultured and educated, three of them getting the highest educational distinctions and positions available to Indians in the British Empire.

His eldest son Khan Bahadur Choudhry Sharafat Hussain had been a member of the Provincial Legislature since 1934, a member of the Shahabad District Board, Chairman of the Arrah Municipality and is associated with several Public organisations of the Province and his District, and the youngest one Choudhry Berasat Hussain, a

gentleman in the truest sense of the term, though keeping indifferent health, has inherited most of the endearing qualities of his venerable father. His third son Mr. Hefazat Hussain, is B.A. (Cantab), and a member of the Indian Civil Service, at present secretary to the U. P. Government incharge of the P. W. D. and Irrigation Department. Dr. Reyasat Hussain, his fourth son is an M.B, B. S. (Pat.) L. R. C. P. (London), M. R.C.S. (London) and at present the Police Surgeon at Patna.

Late Mr. Wazahat Hussain, his second son was a B. Sc. (Tripus) from the University of Cambridge M. A. ( London ), Bar-at-Law, and a member of the Indian Civil Service. He was District Magistrate of several districts in the United Provinces, was Secretary to the Government P.W.D. and Irrigation Department during the congress Ministry, was Home Member for five years in Kashmir state, lately Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and just a fortnight before his death, which sad incident took place on the 4th Dec. 1945 at Arrah enroute to Calcutta, it was hinted in the Press that he was the Governor designate of the Central Provinces

Thus Choudhry Karamat Hussain's life while speaking of the tragedy of the Indo-British relations, also emphasises the stern fact that no real public virtue is to be found where private is not.

Indeed he can love not the whole, who loves no part.



# BABU DEO KUMARJI JAIN

( 1877—1907 )

*By*

(Amod Kumar Jain, First Year Commerce)

The lives of great men of culture, learning and spiritual attainments are best studied as a whole but generally the closing periods of such lives are the most sublime, the quintessence of the whole life as they are.

This we find fully illustrated in the life of Danvir Babu Deo Kumar Jain, who has left a landmark in the cultural and educational advancements of the Jain Community throughout India.

Before his death he remained confined to bed for three and half months. During this period not a day passed when he did not perform his strict religious duties regularly. Though the disease was a fatal one, he was quite unmindful of the consequences. There was no body to look after his family consisting of his wife and two young sons just within their teens but this fact did not produce any disturbing effect on his mind, resigned as he had everything of his in the hands of Providence. The only idea which occupied his mind was to die peacefully with the name of the Supreme Being on his lips. So in order to keep a spiritual atmosphere around him, he had requisitioned the services of a high class Jain Sadhu named Varni Nemisagarji, who remained with him all the twenty four hours reciting holy books. His disease grew worse but his mind drew nearer to extra-mundane things. He was taken to Calcutta for operation. No doubt the doctors were not very hopeful of recovery but unlike an ordinary worldly man he struggled not for life but for death, which seemed to be more alluring to him. Six hours before his death he took 'Sallekhana'<sup>1</sup> and resolved not to eat or drink anything even if his life be saved anyhow. Then sending off everybody from his presence he absorbed himself in hearing scriptures from the aforesaid Nemiji and passed away in perfect peace and tranquility.

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1. This is one of the most difficult Jain vows according to which a person suffering from some serious illness, resolves to give up for ever the enjoyment of one or more things in case his life is saved.

This incident portrays a strength of mind and a spirit of renunciation seldom found in a man leading family life. Let us now look into his career to find the sources of such extraordinary and sterling qualities of head and heart.

Babu Deo Kumarji was born in an ancient, high and cultured Zamindar family of Arrah on the 7th March 1877. His grandfather Babu Prabhu Dasji who was a great scholar of Sanskrit and a man of charitable and religious disposition, got constructed many temples in different parts of India and a big Dharamshala on the Bank of the Ganges at Benares.

The father of Babu Deo Kumarji, Babu Chandrakumarji was also a pious man and had made a Jain temple at Kousambi. But unfortunately he died at an early age. At that time Babu Deo Kumarji was only ten years old. He inherited a big estate and along with it also the charitable disposition and religious zeal of his father and grandfather. Being a minor his estate went under the control of 'Court of Wards'. He was married at the age of seventeen. When he passed the I. A. examination, the District Magistrate pressed him to drop his studies and look after his zamindari. He was very much desirous of graduating but circumstances compelled him to take the burden of his estate and family on his young shoulders. After a few years he was appointed an Honorary Magistrate and he stuck to that post for many years. But in the midst of all these tiring occupations he always found time to study religious books and hold religious discourses with scholars.

In the year 1900 his younger brother Babu Dharam Kumarji, died of plague at Parasnath Hills where he was on pilgrimage. He was married only a few months before in Mathura. He was a very brilliant student reading in B. A.. Babu Deokumarji was very much shocked but he bore it peacefully and at once felt his duty towards his brother's wife Pandita Chanda Baiji Jain who was only fourteen years old at that time. He appointed big scholars of Jainism so that her tender mind might become religious. He also appointed learned teachers to teach her English, Hindi and other subjects. Besides this, he himself taught her from time to time. As a result of all these she is now a living monument to Babu Deokumarji's

spirit of renunciation and zeal for service to Society. It is she who founded the Jaina Bala Vishram at Arrah in 1921 and has been conducting it with great success. She also edits the the Jain Mahila-darsh and the *Akṣhil Bhartiya Jain Mahila Parishad*.

Babu Deokumarji had a very fine grasp of the Jain philosophy and he realised the potentialities of the tolerant preachings of "Syadbad"<sup>1</sup> philosophy, so much needed in the Indian Society, torn with religious strife and dissensions. So on the 12th of June 1905 he established a "Syadbad Pathshala" in Benares which in a few years grew to "Mahavidyalaya" and made a gift of the "Dharamashala" made by his grandfather for housing it.

Now he rivetted his attention towards South India which is a veritable arsenal of religious faiths. He knew there was a mine of Jain Literature lying in oblivion unexploited by scholars. So in the year 1907 he started for a pilgrimage in the South India with his whole family. He also took with him chosen lecturers and musicians. He visited almost each and every place of pilgrimage and was filled with a sense of pride at the immensity of Jain Literature and things of Jain art and culture like the 56 feet high and 1200 years old stone image of 'Sri Bahubali Swami' but he was much grieved, at the same time, to see that there was none to look after or appreciate these things which were on the verge of ruin by the ravages of time. He then and there took a vow of leading a 'Brahmachari' life till he collected all the available literature of Jainism and made provision for their safe upkeep. Accordingly where-ever he went, he spurred people to open libraries to collect and preserve these things. In many places he himself laid the foundation stone of such libraries.

Thus making an extensive tour of the Bombay Presidency, Sravanbelgola, Mysore, Bangalore, Mangalore and other places, his party reached Mudbidri. Here he met with a number of archaeological Finds and Jain images of exquisite beauty made of diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other valuable stones. But to his utter

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1. This is an important branch of Jain Philosophy, which holds that every thing can be viewed in more than one aspect. So what is real in one sense, can be unreal in another.

surprise and pain he found the people indifferent to their enviable surroundings and possessions due to their ignorance. So he called a meeting of the Jain community there and through lectures and persuasions brought home to them the need of religious and educational institutions. The response was prompt and sufficient money was collected to start the institution at once. Now with the same zeal and fervour he proceeded to Belgaun and several other places exhorting people to follow the same line of action as suggested by him in Mudbidri and the response was equally good every where. Now returning from his South India pilgrimage and being in possession of several resuscitated ancient Jain Literatures, he felt the necessity of establishing a centre at his own headquarters at Arrah where he could preserve those valuable materials and make them available to research scholars.

With this end in view he established "The Central Jain Oriental Library" which is now housed in a beautiful up-to-date building, built at the cost of several thousands of rupees. The Library has now become a growing institution having thousands of high class books on different topics concerning all the religions and almost all the schools of philosophy of the world, four thousand and five hundred manuscripts on 'Bhojaptra' a good many collection of rare coins, stamps and antique sacred paintings. Under the auspices of this library is also published 'The Jain Sidhant Bhasker' a high class periodical which is subscribed by most of the intellectual aristocracy of the country and the centres of research works. It is these characteristics of this library which won the approbation of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and other great personalities of India when they happened to visit this part of the country. It has also attracted scholars from Germany and America who specially came to this place in connection with research works.

Again Babu Deokumarji, being an advocate of female education, established, at the same time, a Primary Girls' School at Arrah. The effect produced by this institution is evident from the fact that today we find not a single illiterate woman in the Jain community at Arrah.

He also worked for the All India Digamber Jain Mahasabha which aims at roping in all the scattered elements of the Jain community

and organising them into a homogenous body. He was to a large extent responsible for the popularity of the Mahasabha. In the Kundalpur session of the Mahasabha held in April 1907, he was elected President. His presidential speech was vibrant with the same religious spirit as was evinced during his south India pilgrimage and in his editorials of the 'Jain Gazette'. He chalked out in his speech several programmes for the emancipation of Jain community which still serve as a beacon light to social and religious reformers of the community. The speech on the whole was bristling with gems of noble thought—provoking ideas, and I may crave the indulgence of the readers if I quote a few of them here :—

“Our community has been the blind imitators of others, unmindful of the situation of our own country, the time, the formation, organisation and policy of the society. This has robbed us of our faculty of independent thought and action. We are here for bringing about reformation in the society, and society being comprised of individuals we should spare no pains in working for the welfare of the widows and the orphans; we should provide for the education of children, character-formation of youngmen, right use of the money of the aged and big persons and never allow them to go astray of the right path, so that they may attain salvation in the end.”

He further added “The world cannot progress without ‘Dharma’ and for its establishment we have got to banish age-worn customs, superstitions and fears of all description. This alone will place the society on a firm basis and make it immortal.”

In the end he diagnoses the real disease of the body politic when he says “The most painful factor in our society is that we are not tolerant towards people differing from us in religion, thought and action”, and exhorted the audience thus “We should appreciate and respect any one, belonging to any community who has worked for the betterment of his community in however small a degree it may be.”

Coming back from Kundalpur conference while he was planning fresh fields of activities and services, Providence was planning otherwise. He fell seriously ill soon after and breathed his last in August 1907, in the extraordinary circumstances already enumerated.

We have already seen how peacefully and manfully he embraced death. At that time he had no anxiety about any thing except the preservation of the ancient scriptures and the uplift of the community. So for this purpose he created a trust of a property worth more than a lac of rupees fetching an annual income of about ten thousand rupees. This Trust now maintains the Central Jain Oriental Library, Arrah, the Girls, School Arrah, finances the Syadbad Mahavidyalay Benares, charitable dispensaries at Shri Parsvanath and at Arrah and several Jain temples at different places. Besides these it renders financial help to poor and deserving students irrespective of caste and creed. He further made an appeal to the members of his community and its leaders in the following words:—

“My last request to my Jain brothers and the leaders is that they should immediately strive for the preservation of ancient ‘Shastras’ and ‘Puranas’. It is these things that will proclaim the loftiness of Jain religion and propogate its light throughout the world, making it immortal. This was my aspiration since long and I had taken a vow of leading a life of celibacy till I fulfil this work. I am deeply pained not to have the good fortune of accomplishing this holy task. Now it is for you to take a vow for the completion of this holiest of holy tasks. The responsibility is now entirely yours.”

This last message of his, spurred the entire community into action and his two illustrious sons, Babu Nirmal Kumar Jain, Ex. Member Council of State and Babu Chakreshwar Kumar Jain, B. Sc., B. L., Ex. M. L. A., even in the midst of their manifold preoccupations leave no stone unturned to see that every word of the message and the purposes mentioned in the trust are completely fulfilled.

In the end when we have surveyed the volume of works done by Babu Deokumar Ji and see that he accomplished all these at the early age of thirty, we are simply wonder-struck and are reminded of the very apt saying that “Man lives not in years but in deeds.”

The Jagdispore branch of the family has become famous through the heroic deeds of Kuar Singh. Udwant had four sons, named, Gujarai, Umrayo, Rana and Digha. Gujarai was succeeded by his son Lal and grandson Bhupnararan. The latter was succeeded by Shahabzada Singh, the son of Umrayo. Francis Buchanan describes Shahabzada the father of Kuar Singh as "a great favourite with his tenantry and with those who farmed his rents, from neither of whom he ever exacts money by legal process or violence and both classes are said to be deeply in arrears."

Coming back to the main line of Dumraon, we find Haril Singh succeeded by his son Chhatradhari, who espoused the cause of the English and rendered great help to them in the battle of Buxar. Chhatradhari was succeeded by his son Vikramjit in 1770. The latter ruled over Bhojpur till 1805, when he was succeeded by Jayprakash Singh. Jayprakash paid off a considerable part of the debt incurred by his father and rebuilt the palace which had been burnt down by Mir Kasim. He is described by Buchanan to have been very attentive to business, giving no opportunity to his servants to embezzle the funds. He used to support a large number of scholars studying under his family priest. He was succeeded in 1838 by his grandson Jankiprasad, who died in 1843, when Maheshwar Baksh, younger son of Jayprakash occupied the *Gaddi*. The son of Maheshwar Baksh was Raja Radhaprakash, who has been described by Chief Justice Dawson Miller as a "nature's gentleman." Radhaprakash had only one daughter who was married to the Maharaja of Rewa. On his death in 1894 the estate was managed by his wife Maharani Beniprasad Kuar till her death in 1907. For the next five years the estate was managed by the Court of Wards.

It was in 1912 that Keshav Prasad, a descendant of Arimardan Singh, the younger son of Haril Singh succeeded to the estate. He was a man of steel, with a strong physic and dominating personality. His calm, deep and commanding eyes reflected the heart of a hero. He was absolutely fearless and throughout his life he remained a tenacious fighter. The title of Maharaja Bahadur was conferred on him in 1914. He had unbounded love for his tenants and tried to improve their economic status in every possible way. He personally

looked into almost every detail of administration of his big estate. He did not allow any of the *amalas* to exact money from his tenants. He was deeply interested in farming and introduced many scientific devices to improve it. Another hobby of his was cattle breeding. He took delight in filling up the Raj Goshālā with the best breeds of cows and bullocks. His services to the people and to the country were recognised by the Government in 1919 when he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Maharaja Bahadur Kesav Prasad Singh was appointed to the high office of the executive councillor of the Governor of Bihar and Orissa in 1926 in succession to Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha. He was incharge of the finance of the province. While presenting the Budget for the year 1927-28 he made a masterly survey of the provincial revenue and expenditure since 1921. The first reform introduced was to print the Civil Budget Estimates through the Finance Department in such a way as to make these readily intelligible to the public. He took great care in maintaining the solvency of the government. In his Budget Speech in 1928-29 he made a strong plea of revision of the financial settlement between the Central and Provincial Government. He pointed out "so far as Government is concerned any hopes of expansion or of assisting the local bodies to expand their activities, save within very narrow limits, must be abandoned until something accrues which will have the effect of permanently expanding our revenues. This is the first fact that we must impress upon the Royal Commission. We consider that our case is strong. Whatever further Reforms may be introduced it seems to us that the prospects of the success are, to say the least of it, jeopardised by our financial necessities; and that a financial readjustment should be regarded as a condition precedent to any further amendment of the constitution."

The late Maharaja Bahadur did not speak very often in the Legislative Council, but whenever he did rise to reply to his critics he could use effective arguments to silence them. A prominent zamindar representing the Tirhut landholders said in criticism to the Budget introduced by the Maharaja Bahadur that he should reduce the expenditure and distribute the savings to the poor. In reply to this the Maharaja Bahadur observed—"I do not think that any



member of Government—certainly not the Hon'ble Ministers—would consider that I have failed to act up to the first of these two pieces of advice. As regards the second, it is not the function of the Government to distribute alms, but it is their function to see that the claims of the poorer classes of the community are not overlooked. The Hon'ble members have heard what the Hon'ble minister have had to say on this subject which sufficiently repudiates the criticism that the poorer classes have been neglected. I have no doubt that if the financial settlement with this province is amended and more funds are made available the claims of the rural population will again receive full consideration." The provinces have now got somewhat larger financial resources. The revenue of Bihar has doubled itself in course of the last seventeen years. A part of the credit for this must go to the Late Maharaja Bahadur.

In keeping with the tradition of his family, Maharaja Bahadur Keshav Prasad Singh used to hold conferences of great Sanskrit scholars twice a year in the temple of Bihariji. On these occasions he distributed handsome rewards to Pundits. In the midst of pomp and ceremony, the Maharaja's heart yearned for peace and solitude. To satisfy his craving he erected a beautiful bungalow in the heart of the jungles with a very charming garden around it.

His worthy son Maharaja Bahadur Ramrana Bijoy Pratap Singh has made himself immortal by giving a princely donation of twenty-one acres of land in the heart of the Arrah town to the H. D. Jain College. Indeed, this is an eloquent testimony to his great zeal for the cause of higher education in this district.

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*Erratum* : In page 102, lines 23 & 25, read Radhaprasad instead of Radha-prakash.

**Economic Life of Shahabad.**

The book will contain the following articles :

- (1) Population problem of the District.
- (2) Diversification of Employment (describing the various occupations and employments of the people of the district.)
- (3) Emigration—its nature and causes (areas to which the Shahabadians migrate either temporarily or permanently and the causes and effects of such emigration.)
- (4) Rivers of Shahabad and their economic effects.
- (5) Irrigation and its effects (a study in contrast between the irrigated areas and unirrigated areas like Bhabua and South Sadar Subdivision)
- (6) Agricultural cropping (soil, climate, crops, their yields and means to improve them.)
- (7) Sugar Cane.
- (8) Forest Products.
- (9) Live Stock Resources.
- (10) Agricultural Finance.
- (11) Land tenure and feudal traditions.
- (12) Peasant Proprietors.
- (13) Landless Labourers.
- (14) Role of women in the Economic Life of Sahabad—
- (15) Mineral Resources.
- (16) Dalmia Group of Industries.
- (17) Sugar Mills.
- (18) Small Scale Industries.
- (19) Cottage Industries.
- (20) Handloom and weaving industries.
- (21) Effects of the War on the economic life of the District.

Articles of the above topics are invited from the students and the staff of the H. D. Jain College. Those who want to carry on investigations on any of the above topics will please see the Principal before the 31st January, 1946. The Principal will be glad to supply references and questionnaire. The articles must be submitted on or before the 12th March, 1946.

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## THREE PRIZES FOR STUDENTS

Students of the H. D. Jain College are requested to attempt the articles numbering 4, 6, 8, 9, 15, 17 and 20 of the H. D. Jain College Studies No. 2. viz. Economic Life of Shahabad.

The Writer of the best of these papers will be awarded a Cash Prize of Rs. 50/- by Mr. C. K. Jain, the President of the Governing Body of the College.

Dr. B. B. Majumdar will offer the "Radford Prize" of Rs. 50/- to the student who proves most helpful in collecting information regarding the Economic Life of Shahabad. Certificates of honour will be awarded to all those who will help in this work.

Prof. Devendra Kumar has kindly agreed to award a Cash Prize of Rs. 25/- to the student who writes the second best paper.

